



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

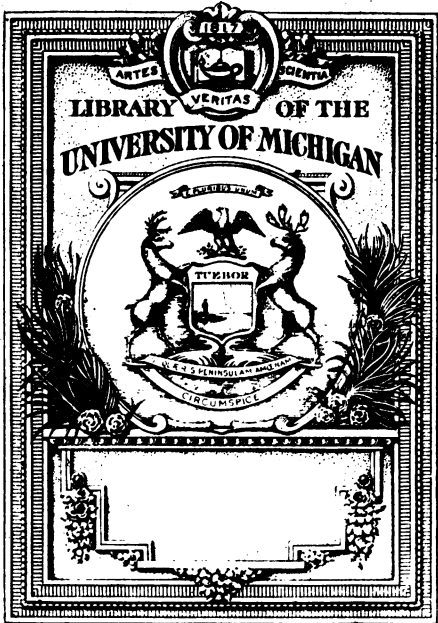
We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

6/21/9



C 7-64

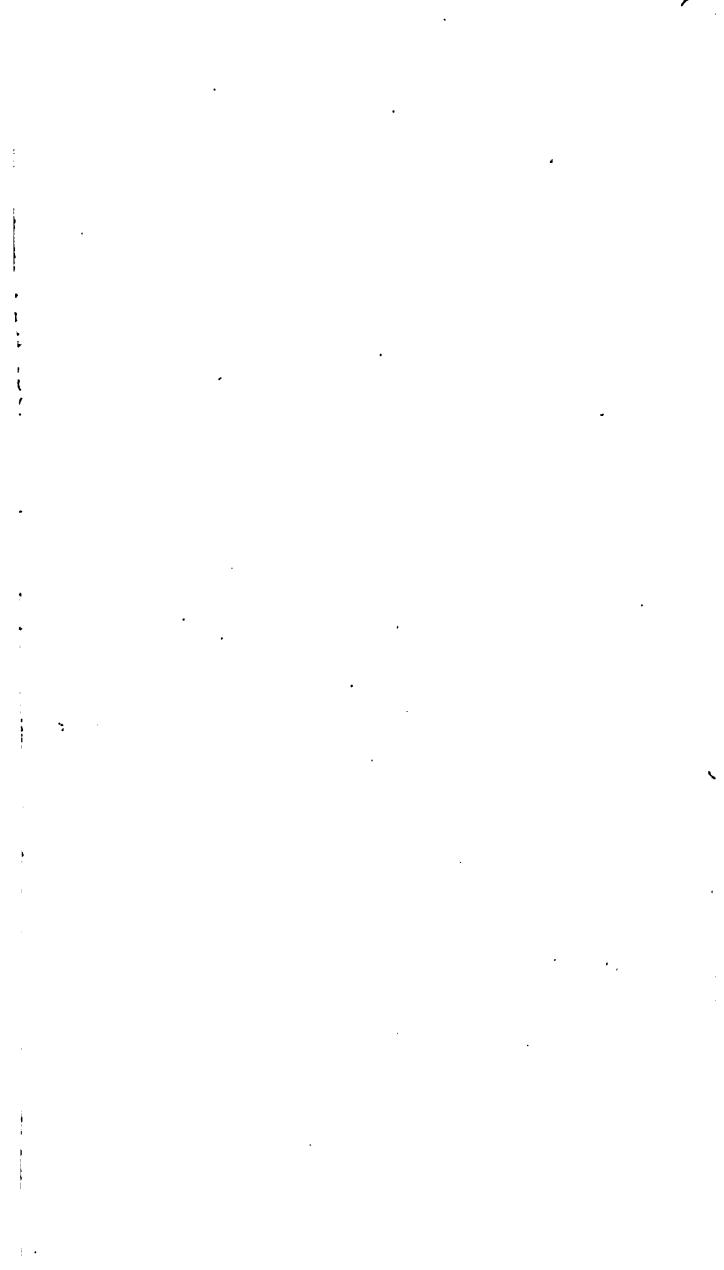
11/3

848

G336

tJ32







PLACIDE, A Spanish Tale.

~~~~~  
IN TWO VOLS.  
~~~~~

TRANSLATED FROM
LES BAT TUÉCAS,

OF

MADAME DE GENLIS, *Stéphanie*
Félicité Ducrest de Saint Aubin comtesse
de, afterwards marquise de S...

BY ALEXANDER JAMIESON.

VOL. I.

London:

Printed for W. SIMPKIN & R. MARSHALL, Stationers'
Court, Ludgate Street.

1817.

**Edward Hodson, Printer,
15, Cross Matton Garden, London**

English
Sanders
10.20.31
24664

2 v. TO MONSIEUR THE COUNT

ANATOLE DE MONTESQUIOU,

THIS WORK IS DEDICATED.

My early and young friend,

11-25-31
A friendship of twelve years is the oldest that one can boast of at your age, and in these times, it is even so to me, when it has undergone no abatement. Hence we can felicitate each other in our reciprocal fidelity. True admirers of letters and of the arts will never separate or disagree from any ridiculous misunderstanding, or pedantic disputes, which, in these times, are called political opinions. I am proud in having contributed to develope, my dear Anatole, the pure taste of those delicious and useful occupations which in every situation, add a charm to our life, and console us under every oppression.

In the bosom of a family, as interesting by its union as by its respectability and virtues, ever continue, with the same assiduity, to pursue those advantageous studies, the benefit of which will contribute to your happiness hereafter. I will not offer to disclose your qualifications, but I may be allowed to say that, were it not for the delicacy of your mind, friendship would long ere now have enjoyed the success of your talents and abilities.

Receive, my dear Anatole, this pledge of my tender affection; it is a gift of the heart, having never offered it but to friendship. It is a pleasure to me to give you another proof of those sentiments which are the basis of our friendship, and which I will preserve, and carry with me to my tomb.

PREFACE.

EVERY thing which is said in this work respecting the Battuécas, their origin, their singular history, their character, their manners, *et cetera*, is strictly true. The description of their mysterious valley is faithfully drawn. The adventure of the Duke d'Albe, who, by so wonderful an accident, discovered this small colony, is also an historical fact. All these details, so curious and interesting, are to be found in the Dictionary of Moréri, in the travels of M. de Bourgoing (an author of much celebrity from his fidelity). Several Spanish writers have also spoken of

these people, and all their accounts perfectly agree. This small and fortunate republic existed in all the happiness of its obscurity, and was blessed in being unknown to the rest of the world, even so late as 1806; but it is doubtful whether, since that epoch, it hath been disturbed by the sanguinary war which desolated Spain. One would fain believe that, defended by its rocks, preserved by its poverty, ambition did not deign to enslave and corrupt it.

There is nothing, however, historical in the work I now offer to the public, except the details respecting the Battuécas; every thing else is fiction. I have endeavoured to give some interest to the valley of the Battuécas; but in admiring the innocence of their manners, in criticizing our own, my object was not to satirize

civilization ; on the contrary, my design has been to prove that heroic virtue, which is nothing but the happy exercise of a strong mind, is never to be met with where there is nothing to combat, and is never to be found but in the midst of every species of seductions, which unite to overcome and annihilate it ; and, consequently, must be sought for in a state of civilization.

Placide, the young Battuécas, and the hero of this romance, is not a savage without reflection or judgment ; nor is he a misanthrope, who sees every thing on its dark side only. He is animated with benevolence to all mankind,—enlightened by the truths of christianity,—he possesses that true cultivation of mind, which gives perfection to our moral ideas. Endowed with the happiest or-

ganization, born with an ardent imagination, and a noble and feeling heart, he is suddenly thrown into the great world, without knowing the secrets of our arts and sciences, and entirely ignorant of our follies, our customs, and our manners. He is then alternately astonished and confounded by enthusiasm and indignation. His censures and praises are never exaggerated, yet their energy would not be natural in a man, whose habits have been familiarised from his infancy with our follies and our vices; but they are strikingly just in the mouth of a Battuécas, for such must be the impressions of a rational and intelligent being, whose judgment hath never been corrupted, and who, far from being cloyed with the specious appearances of the world, must feel and enjoy its charms with avidity.

There is in this character and in this situation something new, moral, and eminently dramatic; which, I believe, I have tolerably well developed in those scenes, the most important, that the subject would allow me; but the plan of the work might have been much more extended, the details more luxuriant; in short, I might have enlarged it to at least an hundred pages more. I do not think that the work will be mistaken, so far as respects the romance; but the criticisms on society are not complete; they might have been so, not by cool reasonings, but from the experiences of active life; and it may be considered a defect not to have fulfilled my task. A constitution debilitated, duties which I was bound to fulfil, and other causes, have obliged me to curtail these volumes,

though much against my inclination. I preferred abridging it, than to add scenes, which I might have written rather negligently. In fine, I have never written any work with more care or more reflection; and the character of Placide is that on which I have bestowed the most profound attention. At all events, I think that I offer to the public a work written, though in a short time, with all the application which my feeble talents would enable me to bestow upon it.

PLACIDE,
OR
LES BATTUECAS.

~~~~~  
VOL. I.  
~~~~~

AS early as the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety one, no person in France could be mistaken, at least entirely, as to the consequences of the revolution; yet some courageous men were found, who, guided by the purest intentions, still voluntarily remained in Paris. They could not hope to arrest the progress of a torrent which broke through every bulwark; but they flattered themselves that they could, at least, moderate its impetuosity. As during great storms, so long as you can be of any utility in the situation wherein Providence

hath placed you, to think then of your personal safety and to abandon your post, must be culpable desertion.

Among those virtuous men who still entertained the hope of doing any good, was the Marquis of Palmene, a deputy of the national convention; but he also lost all the illusions which had made him encounter so many dreadful dangers. He had seen severed the sacred tie which had united the altar, the throne, the state, and his country. He had seen baseness, impiety without any bounds and without any mask, and cupidity rushing on the reins of a sanguinary government, seizing them with fury, and exclaiming, "Possession and revenge."—At the sound of these words thousands of scaffolds were erected—priests, nobles, and rich men were sacrificed. Instead of the ancient doctrines, were decreed a general emancipation and freedom from all duties. honour and virtue were replaced by frenzied and boundless ambition. No writ-

ings were tolerated except those which deified crime, calumniated history, dishonoured the past, and proscribed all recollections. Futurity was then shrouded by a despicable veil, and robbed of its certainty, its consolations, and its sublimity. There was no alternative but death or flight.

The Marquis of Palmene was fortunate enough to find the means of flying with his only son, the amiable and young Adolphus, then aged eighteen years; they fled into Spain. Adolphus there expected to find the being whom his father since his infancy had destined to be his bride. The very day of her departure he was to have been united to her by an indissoluble tie; the altar had been secretly prepared in the recess of a vault. This was the only method which people then had of being united, when they wished religion to sanctify their vows. A priest, at the peril of his life, was waiting at the altar for the bridegroom and bride; but a

new and pressing danger had suddenly obliged Calista (this was the young lady's name) and her mother to precipitately fly without any delay.—Adolphus, in the midst of his despair, was consoled by the certainty of soon meeting again with Calista in Spain. The tender and ardent affection he felt for her, was not a vulgar passion; it was a sentiment founded on esteem and duty, strengthened by habit and all the charms and pleasing reflections of his infant days.—How long the road appeared to him!

At last, after a thousand disguises, a thousand perils without ceasing, the two fugitives happily crossed the much dreaded frontiers of France. They were both on foot—At that moment Adolphus precipitated himself in his father's arms, and the latter prostrated himself on the soil of that fortunate, hospitable, and religious land, which he had chosen as the place of his exile; he embraced it with all the transports of a mariner who, hav-

ing escaped from the fury of the storm and the merciless billows, safely reaches the shore.

"My dear father," cried Adolphus, "you are then out of danger! The sword of the assassin is no longer suspended over your head, infuriated crime will no longer threaten your days, and I shall soon see Calista!"

"Dear Adolphus," replied the Marquis, "I shall no longer tremble for thee. Ah!" pursued he, "after this long stupor, I am able to make use of the free exercise of my intellectual faculties and my reason; and I am able to acknowledge my sentiments and to profess my belief. I have left in France none but sanguinary brigands, and unfortunate beings who are obliged to conceal their opinions, their regrets, their wishes, and their sorrows. There remain in that unfortunate country none but furious tyrants, slaves, and victims ready to fall under the fatal axe: here religion represses the passions, strengthens

and perfects our natural virtues ; here justice and goodness through her influence, become duties,—she prescribes to fathers, to husbands, fidelity, vigilance and disinterestedness,—she maintains children in respect and obedience,—she upholds the throne and the legitimate authority,—she gives to the law the sanction of heaven,—in short, she holds out her arms to all suffering beings, receives them into her bosom and consoles them.

“Alas !” said Adolphus, “our unfortunate country is deprived of all these benefits.”

“My son, let us offer up our prayers for her. Here we shall pass our nights without terror and our days without tumult ; but let not the sweetness of repose and security steel us against the evils of our countrymen ; let us rather ennoble our exile by generous sentiments. Let us not resemble those guilty deserters and villainous outlaws, who detest the land in which they were born. Let us ever

preserve French hearts upon a foreign land ; and though fugitives and proscribed, let us still have a claim on our country by our wishes."

As he spoke these words he cast his eyes on his right, and stopped suddenly, struck with astonishment. He perceived in a field, on the skirts of the high road, an antique wooden cross, blackened by time, but carefully preserved by the piety of the surrounding peasants. This religious and rural monument was rendered doubly precious to them by an old tradition. It was protected by a small dome of straw sustained by four large trees, whose tops had been cut off for this purpose. This rustic temple was surrounded by a hedge of myrtle and white-thorn, which defended it from the approach of any cattle. At the sight of this gothic cross, which was loaded with the flowers of the fields and pious offerings, the Marquis felt the most lively sensation. After having witnessed so many sacrileges and impieties,

he knew how to appreciate again the happiness of finding himself on christian ground. It seemed to him as if he had once more found his religion. He contemplated with delight that revered sign of our salvation, which was also to him the sacred pledge of his personal safety; for, naturally we attach to it, all our ideas of order, of peace, of morality, and of humanity. —Our two travellers knelt at the foot of the cross.

“O! my God!” exclaimed the Marquis, “may reason and virtue yet one day fix the wandering desires of our inconstant nation, and may this one which receives us, ever persevere in the right way.”

Such was his prayer. The love of his country and the gratitude of hospitality could not inspire anything better.

Our travellers rising up, perceived some characters carved on the cross, by which they learned that it had been erected in that field more than two hundred years.

“Look at it my son,” said the Marquis;

see how this fragile wood hath been preserved; while in France, England, and in Germany, new systems have destroyed in the space of two centuries, so many superb and religious monuments of marble and of bronze! But in the country we have just entered, every thing bears the stamp of that religion which hitherto hath been respected, and which for its antiquity goeth as far back as the days of the Apostles. Faithful people!! How you would defend, were it necessary, your religion, your country and your king!"

Our travellers, who understood the Spanish language perfectly well, reached Madrid, where they had relations of considerable rank at court. They were received with that generosity so natural to Spaniards. The Marquis had found means to send into Spain a considerable sum of money, which afforded him a sufficiency for a few years; it was enough for emigrées, who always lived in hopes of soon returning into France.

Adolphus felt an inexpressible sensation on entering into Madrid. It was there he expected to have found Calista, and the Countess Auberive, her mother, who had left France six weeks before him. The two emigrants arrived soon at the house of the banker to whom the Marquis had given letters to the Countess: What was the sorrow of Adolphus, when the banker told them that he had not heard any thing of these two French ladies?

“What hath become of them!” exclaimed Adolphus, seized with terror. “Great God!” continued he, “they have not been able to pass the frontiers, and they are arrested!”

At these terrible words, and his sorrow choaking him,

“My dear son,” replied the Marquis, “their names are so well known, that if this misfortune had befallen them, we should have heard of it before we quitted France, since they left it nearly two

months before us. Their flight was perfectly well arranged, and they were accompanied by one of our very intelligent friends ; and who, without having participated in the crimes of the Republicans, hath a great deal of credit among them. Be assured that they are in Spain, but some incident of which we are ignorant, may have hindered them from proceeding to Madrid."

" But no letters!" said Adolphus. " They have without doubt written to us," replied his father, " but the letter may have been lost."

The Marquis talked thus to pacify his son, though he felt himself very uneasy, and time only augmented his inquietude. After six months spent in Madrid, and which gave them no intelligence as to the fate of those two fugitives, some slight information induced the Marquis to go to Cadiz. He remained eight months in that city, without learning any thing new. He returned to Madrid, where Adolphus

overcome by sorrow, fell dangerously ill. The skilfulness of the Physicians, and the tenderness of his father, brought him again from the grave ; but nothing could cure the mortal wound of his heart.

The Marquis had been eighteen months in Spain, when he received a letter from the Baron d'Olmar, that friend, who had guided the flight of the Countess and her daughter. The Baron wrote that he had conducted them as far as Bayonne under fictitious names, and had contrived to enable them to pass as his relations ; but having arrived there, he had been separated from them by a very strange event. The day after his arrival at Bayonne, he received a note from Calista, which informed him, that her mother had altered her design ; that she would not go into Spain, and that she had found another asylum, which, from prudential motives, she must for the present keep secret. The note ended with protestations of gratitude, and a promise of yet informing the

Baron d'Olmar of the place of their refuge. The Baron sent in his letter that very note, and Adolphus well knew the hand-writing. Thus it was impossible to doubt the truth of this relation. At the conclusion of his letter, the Baron added, that he had himself been arrested that same day, and had been detained a long time in prison.

This information relieved Adolphus from the horror of the most gloomy fears, and caused him, at first, as much joy as emotion; but after these sensations had subsided, his fears returned. "What was become of Calista? What motive?—what events could, when they were reaching the frontiers of France, have induced her mother to alter her plans so suddenly? To whom had she confided her safety and her flight? What was this mysterious asylum she had all at once preferred, to that country in which Calista was to find him to whom she had promised her hand and her heart? This conduct was incom-

prehensible." The Marquis himself owned that it was impossible to clear it up. Three months were thus spent in making false conjectures, and seeking after useless information. At the end of that time the Marquis's banker called on him one morning and delivered a letter, saying that "he had received it without knowing from whom or from what country it came." The Marquis opened the envelope, and found a letter on which were these words written:—"To Adolphus Palmene," and he instantly knew Calista's hand writing. Without any delay he called his son; Adolphus came to him. The Marquis gave him the letter, which was dated two months before that time, and Adolphus read with the most lively emotion:—

"O my dear Adolphus! all my sorrows are sweetened when I think of the pleasure you will receive on the receipt of this letter. Be not uneasy on my fate, my dear Adolphus, I am at least out of the reach of impious and wicked men, and in

an asylum where nothing can disturb the peace * * * * * Let us be resigned. Our separation may be long, but we shall be joined, and that grand day will re-unite us for ever! Let us submit our impotent and feeble wishes to the designs of an ever beneficent Providence. O! dear Adolphus, during that sorrowful absence let religion sustain and console you. Adieu! My soul united to yours by the purest sentiments, will follow you every where and watch over you. Do not attempt to discover where I am. All your researches will be fruitless. You will receive every year two letters from me. Adieu! When you form a generous resolution and perform a good action, think of me! Without doubt I shall ever be present to your recollection. Alas! Adolphus, beloved friend of my infancy, and those happy days of my life which have so rapidly fled away; it seemed then as if heaven had created us for each other. Born in the same year—nurtured and brought

up under the same roof—sweet and deceitful hope hovered round our cradle—sentiment animated our first amusements—a happy veil hid from our view the impenetrable darkness of futurity—nothing but the overturning of Divine and human laws, and the confusion of all France, could crush our happiness. In fine, we have felt that happiness so pure and without alloy; we have loved without fear, and without remorse we have lived!

“Let us return thanks to heaven, who amidst so many crimes and excesses hath preserved our innocence. Then adieu, dear Adolphus; you who waited for me at the foot of the nuptial altar—O my husband! adieu! once more adieu! shed no tears over the fate of the sorrowful Calista, but offer your prayers for her, and implore for her the supreme goodness; and believe that her unalterable tenderness will follow you even beyond the tomb!”

Adolphus wept over this note; twenty times did he read it, and notwithstanding

the date so far back as two months, which at first, transported him with joy, the oftener he read it the more oppressed did he feel himself with unconquerable grief. After many reflections, he imagined that Calista and her mother had shut themselves up in a cloister, and had consecrated themselves to a religious life by irrevocable vows.

The Marquis opposed this idea of his son, by very plain reasons. "She still loves you passionately," said he. "She has solemnly plighted her faith to you; therefore without inducement she cannot have entirely renounced you; especially when nothing obliged her to it, having but a step to come to enter into Spain where she was sure of finding an asylum and money, and being united to you. Besides, even supposing, which is very unlikely, that she hath become a nun, it would be against her duty to nourish and express the sentiments which she writes to you. In short, were the case such, a letter from her mother would

certainly have informed me, and there could be no reason why she should not have done so."

"But where is she? and what signifieth her profound secrecy? I am ignorant; and I confess this conduct is inexplicable to me, especially when I think on the sudden and unforeseen manner in which they have separated themselves from the Baron d'Olmar, and the note that Calista wrote him then, and in which she expressed neither surprise nor displeasure?"

These reflections bewildered Adolphus; but he had a predominant thought, which consoled him. He often repeated to himself, "Calista, I hope, hath escaped from France! She loves me! She has promised to write to me!" In the expectation of another letter he grounded all his hopes. He enjoyed nothing present, giving himself up to a thousand vague and dismal inquietudes; and thus he spent six months, which appeared to him an eternity of time. At last this much wished for

letter arrived by the post, and was addressed to the Marquis of Palmene, dated as the former, two months prior to its delivery, and marked with the stamp of an English post-office. This letter, which was of as melancholy a tone as the first, contained expressions of the most tender sentiments and religious reflections upon the fragility of human happiness, the life of man, and the submission we owe to the decrees of the Divine Providence. Calista always repeated, she was happy and peaceable. But Adolphus observed with a lively emotion, that the tears of Calista had wetted the paper and effaced a few words. At this time he was fully persuaded that she had been carried off; that the love of some tyrant kept her as a prisoner, that she was forced to observe that incomprehensible mystery which rendered him so unhappy; that her letters were perused, which prevented her from indicating to him the means by which he might answer her.

The Marquis replied to these remarks, in terms to the following effect: "That a ravisher, or a lover of so violent a temper, would not permit her even to write; and that Calista, incapable of uttering a falsehood, would not thus boast of the unchangeable peace of her asylum, if she were at the mercy of a despot, without principles and without reason."

"But, (cried Adolphus,) why hide herself with so much care? Why does she inderdict me the only consolation of corresponding with her, when she could do it without discovering to me even her retreat?"

"At least you will allow she interests herself about you, since she certainly knows our address so exactly. But we must, however, conclude that all this is very strange."

Time brought no alteration to that unaccountable situation in which Adolphus was placed, but it moderated the sensations of his soul. He received regularly

every six months a letter from Calista. Every successive letter renewed his tenderness and his curiosity. In short, notwithstanding the profound sensibility he always found in her letters, he would sometimes accuse her of inconstancy and cruelty; for her conduct became more and more inexplicable; since terror no longer remaining in France, nothing could induce her to give up the husband her mother had destined for her, and forget her family, her friends, and her country.

Calista had left in Paris a friend of her infancy, the amiable and beautiful Leontine, a ward of the Baron d'Olmar. This young lady had always shown to Calista and Adolphus the most tender and sisterly affection. She had been the confidante of all their innocent secrets and their inseparable companion. Her tenderness had spread an inexpressible charm on the happy days of their early youth. Adolphus wrote to her several times, inquiring whether she had heard any thing

of Calista, but was always answered in the negative. At last, Adolphus in spite of all his father's remarks, still harboured the idea that Calista was a nun in some monastery in Portugal, Germany, or Italy.

In eighteen hundred the Marquis began to think of returning to France, and in consequence intended to remain only another year in Spain. He yielded to his son's wish to visit a few castles which they had seen only on their way, and some of the provinces they had not yet been in. Adolphus had then attained his twenty-fifth year. He was sensible, noble-minded and feeling, and tried to forget his unfortunate passion by application to study.

Our travellers in this tour first stopped at Salamanca, where they admired the beautiful modern square, ornamented with three rows of balconies, sustained by superb arcades, covered by medallions in demi relief, representing the profiles of the most illustrious persons of whom Spain can boast. They saw likewise the famous

university of Salamanca, and its most remarkable churches.

The host at the inn where the Marquis lodged, was a man well informed and well behaved. He had received some education, which, in people of his class, is very common in Spain. This man spoke much in his conversation with the Marquis about the famous community of the Battuécas, and here is his account concerning so small and so interesting a colony.

“There exists in Spain, about fourteen leagues from this city, in the diocese of Coria, in the kingdom of Leon, and about eight leagues from Ciudad-Rodrigo, a fertile valley, enclosed on all sides by a chain of enormous rocks forming around it a rampart, which, during centuries, had rendered this retreat inaccessible. This canton is called the vale of the Battuécas. It extends itself almost a league. During entire ages the entrance to this valley was truly inaccessible: however, it hath

ceased to be so now by an event of which I shall give you an account.

“It was thought for a long time that it was impenetrable, because no one had ever been bold enough to approach it. The frightful and wonderful relations respecting that mysterious vale had increased without bounds as time rolled on. The shepherds of the surrounding country, and travellers who had lost their way, had seen clouds of smoke, flames and apparitions of extraordinary figures, spectres and phantoms; formidable voices had been heard to pronounce unknown words. No doubt was entertained but this dreadful place was inhabited by cruel monsters, and was the abode of evil minded magicians and unfortunate ghosts. If by chance shepherds of the neighbouring mountains, drawn thither by the pursuit of their flocks, perceived from afar these rocks, they would shudder with horror and hasten to return back, bringing terror into their hamlets by accounts

of the terrible apparitions they had seen. All their calamities, and every unfortunate event which might afflict the adjacent country,—were attributed to the black enchantments of the sorcerers of the vale of the Battuécas. When a mother wished to correct her disobedient child, it was sufficient to threaten to give it up to the magician of the Battuécas; she could frighten it with nothing more dreadful.

Every year, at the beginning of the spring, the rectors of the country assembled in a body, and filing on in procession, would exorcise these dreaded rocks, that the whole country might be preserved from the machinations of infernal spirits. The mournful melody of their songs usually drew forth some apparitions which confirmed all the recitals of the shepherds. In fact, on the points of the rocks were frequently seen to appear strange figures, which seemed instantly to precipitate themselves into the abyss, with dreadful

gestures, and which was attributed to the virtue and power of the conjurations.

Chance alone at last disclosed the real truth, and that only in the sixteenth century.

The Duke d'Albe having lost himself one day with a small retinue, penetrated into this valley, without knowing where he was. He admired the fertility of a place whose approach had in it something solemn and grand. He found a pretty good number of cottages covered with the foliage of trees, and a people mild and timid, who spoke an unknown language, and in whom his aspect seemed to inspire fear rather than curiosity. Light draperies of white skin formed their vestments. The girls were crowned with flowers and the boys with green leaves; their young mothers wore in their hair garlands composed of ears of barley, symbolical of a happy fruitfulness*

* All these details as well as those which follow are historical

A short time after this adventure, a part of the history of the Battuécas was cleared up. The imagination of historians often more inventive than that of romance writers, supplied the rest; but the following appears to be what is most certain in this history.

Some suppose these fugitives, to have been a small colony of the Goths who had fled from the tyranny of the Moors, and others imagine them to have been a remnant of the ancient Cantabrians, who had sought shelter in this retreat, where nature seemed to offer them every riches sufficient for human happiness, and of that description which conquerors never yet coveted. Flocks of wild goats grazed in this enclosure, and salutary plants and fruitful trees grew spontaneously in the valley, which was watered by innumerable springs issuing from the rocks. It is well known by a tradition preserved among the Battuécas, that towards the year one thousand and nine, the torrent

of Tormes having changed its course, blocked up the only penetrable entrance to the valley, as if heaven wished to secure to itself the repose and security of the peaceable inhabitants of this solitude, who by their sweetness, the simplicity and purity of their manners, really deserved all the divine protection.

The Battuécas thus lived for several ages, in the bosom of Spain, strangers to their country and separated from the rest of the world, whose very existence became problematical to them. By degrees they forgot their maternal tongue, customs which they could no longer observe, laws which had become useless to them, worship without temples and even without priests, and indeed their first origin. However they preserved amongst themselves, by oral traditions, some ideas of a Supreme Being, and sentiments and customs which real savages can never be supposed to have. They had however only preserved the urbanity of civilized people, and were happy in having entirely lost the

refinements, the arts, and the vices of the world.

At the end of two or three centuries an earthquake altered, suddenly, the direction of the torrent which had enclosed their asylum. The entrance of the valley, though still very difficult of access, was, however more free : this great event made no impression on the Battuécas ; for, satisfied with their lot, they resolved not to seek another residence. It is only our recollections, and comparisons of the transition from an obscure situation to a brilliant destiny, that can induce us to form impetuous desires, and inflame our imagination ; the Battuécas had no ambition, for they had no idea of any condition superior to their own ; their possessions though limited, were sufficient for their wants. They did not imagine it was possible to have more dainty food than their herbs and their fruit, nor a drink more delicious than the fresh water which flowed pure from their fountains,

nor habitations more agreeable than their humble cottages.—They lived in a happy union one with another; for nothing could excite in their breast envy or emulation,—strength had there no power, for they admired only equality, peace, and repose,—nor had crowns ever been given to the most enterprising, the bravest or the most ingenious. They were not entirely ignorant, however, that other beings existed beyond the boundaries of their republic. They had often seen with horror, from the tops of their rocks, several intruders; but fear and indolence kept them fixed in this their tranquil abode.

However, the Duke d'Albe after having discovered this singular and solitary people, thought of enlightening them. Missionaries were sent to the Battuécas to teach them the beneficent doctrines and duties of christianity.—Having arrived in the diocese of the bishoprick of Coria, they frightened the inhabitants by the account they gave them of their mission.—It was predicted

by these people, that the missionaries would become the victims of their zeal, and that if they could penetrate into the valley, which to the others appeared impossible, they would find nothing but ghosts and sorcerers.—These missionaries opposed in vain to these terrors, the relation of the Duke d'Albe and his retinue. They were answered that the Duke was in error, and had taken another valley for that of the Battuécas.

These good, religious men, did not enter without some emotion this valley, at once so obscure and so famous; but their minds were soon set at rest, for they could but admire the manners and the innocence of this happy colony, who for ages had followed the law of nature with so much faithfulness, that it seemed as if heaven had separated this portion of intellectual beings from the rest of their species, but the better to prepare them to receive and enjoy the sublime truths of the gospel. In short, the Battuécas em-

braced with joy a religion which inculcated humanity, the love of peace and temperance; for they practised those virtues without effort; and religion, in giving them their proper motive and direction, only strengthened and perfected them; for she adds that perfection which alone ensures to morality the love due to our Creator and christian charity.

These missionaries, the happy apostles of this little corner of Spain, almost believed themselves in the first ages of christianity, freed from obstacles and all persecutions. The Battuécas looked upon them as men sent from heaven, and as their most generous and most magnificent benefactors. The missionaries were never tired of admiring the genius and the astonishing industry of this people; for they had received from them some household utensils, coarse linens, and all the implements of husbandry; but of all the gifts which the missionaries had presented to them, those which charmed them most were some fruits that the Battuécas

had not hitherto known; but which grew only two leagues from the valley.

The missionaries attached themselves in such a manner to these new and docile converts, as to leave no other wishes than that they might close their days among them. They first began by digging out in the rock a temple for worship, the first durable monument of their labours in the valley of the Battuécas. Thus piety, in sanctifying this asylum of peace, innocence, and simplicity, settled there for ever the golden age. These religious men built afterwards a convent in which they might shut themselves up. The church and the monastery still exist. An uninterrupted succession of religious men have inhabited this sanctuary since its foundation, and they are now the only priests, legislators, and physicans of the Battuécas. But the most extraordinary trait in the singular history of these people is, that, since their discovery by the Duke d'Albe, they have constantly

remained in their native valley; and that curiosity hath at no time induced them to leave it.—It is very true that the missionaries have done every thing in their power to keep the Battuécas in this resolution.*

This account of the Battuécas excited the curiosity of the Marquis Palmene and Adolphus his son, who resolved instantly to go and visit this singular spot.—In short, they set off from Salamanca without delay.

In approaching the vale of the Battuécas the Marquis and his son found it much more difficult to penetrate than they had expected;—but when they had once entered it, every thing pleased and charmed them. They gazed with astonishment on the groups of rocks, fantastically hewn, and which on all sides, enclosed hermetically this beautiful valley;—for, in the most scorching heat of

* See the Dictionary of M. Moréri du Cange Warol, and the respectable and authentic travels in Spain, by M. Bourgoing.

summer, the ardour of the sun is tempered by an eternal shade. Thus the climate of this valley differs from the rest of Spain, as much as the freshness of its verdure, its inhabitants, and its manners.—Through the whole extent of this valley flows a stream of the most limpid water, whose fertile peaceable banks, are covered with flowers and perpetual verdure;—flocks of sheep and goats, scattered in the meadows wander at large both day and night in these beautiful pastures;—they have no keepers because they have no possessors; for they form the public riches.—Cottages covered with the foliage of trees, or natural grottos, with the exception of the church and the convent, are the only habitations of this happy abode, where every thing is tranquil and calm, and where every thing inspires its people with reflections and useful meditations:—an unknown charm often obliged our travellers to stop.—They contemplated with pleasure every object which offered

itself to their view. They even found in these transports of admiration a kind of inexpressible pleasure ; and felt themselves disentangled from the illusions of a deceitful world.

“ Here then,” said the Marquis, “ is a fortress which nature has formed merely to shelter innocence and happiness.—The precious metals, which covetuous minds so much pursue, are here unknown, as well as all the productions of the arts :—No one will attack this place!—Pure and sacred spot ! Pride and crime, and cupidity, have never sullied thy bosom ; thine inhabitants are ignorant of the name of war ; for here liberty truly reigns, since ambition hath never been able to produce discord and anarchy.”

Our travellers reached, at length, the monastery, whose cells are, as it were, buried under the rugged rocks and trees whose boughs overshadowed them.—Father Isidore, the superior of the convent, offered them a frugal repast, which was

terminated by the most interesting conversation. This venerable old man gave the Marquis a most feeling description of the people whom he governed.—“Their perfect indifference” said he, “for whatever happens beyond these rocks, is the safeguard of their innocence and their morals. Since the foundation of this convent all the pious who have successively inhabited it, have foreseen how important it was to keep up among the Battuécas this happy carelessness.—As for us, we renounce the world, to bury with them in this solitude, our shortspan of existence.—We find it an easy task to persuade them that they cannot find in any other place the happiness they enjoy here.—From time to time some of them have ventured to go out of the valley, and traverse the country for two or three leagues around; but they have usually been but indifferently received by the shepherds of the neighbouring country, who still entertain against the Battuécas ridiculous prejudices,

either taking them for sorcerers, or flying at their appearance, insult them and often pursue them with stones; and these unfortunate encounters have entirely subdued their curiosity and extinguished their thirst for travelling.

“ However,” continued Father Isidore, “ there has been an exception to this love of the valley, among the Battuécas. For a young man, an orphan these some years, bolder and more enterprising than his companions, hath given us great uneasiness these two years past. He is called **PLACIDE**—he possesses considerable genius, and born with an ardent imagination, and a most feeling heart, he has shewn from his infancy a passionate admiration for the people of the other world, (for ’tis thus the Battuécas designate, the Spaniards of other cantons.) ‘ Those ingenious people,’ he would say, ‘ are the inventors of all arts.’ Yet here nothing is known beyond that common industry which has for its ob-

ject to provide the ordinary necessities of life. All the science of the best informed of the Battuécas, goeth not beyond the elements of reading and writing. Our religious men, the instructors of this small colony, have strictly avoided bringing into this retreat any refined inventions. Divine worship, the ornaments of the church, a crucifix of stone, an image of the virgin, coarsely cut, two or three indifferent pictures, and the vocal music of the church service, have notwithstanding given to the Battuécas some ideas of sculpture, painting, and even of poetry; for we also, in our church, sing hymns in the vulgar tongue. These pieces of poetry so much struck the mind of Placide, that, at the age of fifteen years, he composed some verses himself; and these juvenile productions evinced so much talent, that I could not help putting into his hand five or six volumes of sacred poetry of our best authors. Then his enthusiasm for *the people of the other*

universe had no bounds. He has become one of the best poets of Spain, and I have had printed, unknown to him, at Madrid, a selection of his poetry, without naming the author, and which hath been very generally admired. He was then twenty-two years of age. Thus this young poet, living in obscurity, had, without being aware of it, a very great reputation. His works were in every library. He was even ignorant of his talent; notwithstanding his inventive genius made him improve himself daily in the mechanical arts which had been introduced among the Battuécas, and of which he had only seen the most simple elements. He guessed at things invented for ages. But, as for him, it was creating. This was the way in which he became an excellent drawer of landscapes, and afterwards, intending to give them the appearance of nature, he made himself some colours from the juice of plants. He had never seen any musical instrument, yet he in-

vented for himself the flute and the tymbals. So much industry, talent and activity raised him above his countrymen. He was in this valley the first celebrated Battuécas, for till his appearance these simple people felt only gratitude to those old religious men, who, with the gospel in their hand, brought hither, in the name of heaven, the purest idea of civilization; but now envy discovered itself against this young man, who, had fixed on himself the universal attention. But if by his talents, and the first celebrity acquired in this solitude, he drew upon himself the hatred of the young men of his age, very different were the sentiments with which he inspired the young females, his companions.

“ Till that time, alliances had been formed, either by the conveniencies of neighbourhood, or by the ties of affinity. Love seemed indeed but a secondary motive. But, all at once, it assumed the most dangerous character of passion; from

it suddenly arose pride, vanity, and rivalry.

“ Placide, the object of so many secret wishes, could choose for himself; and comparing among the rival shepherdesses, who had disputed his heart, he chose the most amiable, who was also the most lovely. This preference shed upon the young Inès a portion of Placide’s celebrity. The fame of young Inès reputation caused the jealousy of her companions, and carried to its height the envy which the abilities of Placide had excited in the breast of all his companions. Such were the first impressions made on the public manners in this valley, hitherto so peaceable. However, our authority and our exhortations were sufficient to calm the public mind, and re-establish order amongst our flock.

“ One day Placide came to me,” continued Father Isidore, “ saying, ‘ that he was determined to make a long journey, and go to Madrid.’ What! my child,

quoth I, at the eve of your union with Inès! ‘ She will be only seventeen,’ answered he, ‘ in six months; and our laws will not permit me to marry before that time. I shall then return, for I will be absent only four or five months.’ Pray think well of it; you are going Placide, to throw yourself, without any experience, upon a new world. ‘ I will know,’ said he, ‘ those men better informed than the Battuécas; those inventors of writing, arithmetic, and all our arts. What can I risk among them? They are Christians, more enlightened than we are, and, therefore, must be more virtuous.’ You are determined to believe, my dear Placide, that those men, who are more learned than we, are also better; but in this you are mistaken; for I must apprise you, that, in Madrid, you will find vices of which you have now not the slightest idea, ‘ I own I cannot be persuaded of that declaration; for, it seems impossible to me that vice and

science can be allied.' Yet, my son, you must know what pride and forgetfulness of God have produced even on angels.—
' But with revelation and the sublime morality of the gospel, how can mortal men, whose residence on earth is so short, fall into those dreadful wanderings of the heart? Pride hath overcome immortal creatures, who knew God through his magnificence alone. We shudder at their ingratitude, but it is less inconceivable than would be the same culpability in fragile beings, doomed to death, and who, with the full knowledge of the goodness and the supreme power of the Deity, are also aware of his much dreaded justice. In short, I am determined, and I have been so this long time.'

"It was in vain," pursued Father Isidore, "that I attempted to persuade Placide to abandon this dangerous resolution. All my efforts were fruitless. I advised him to mistrust all external appearances, and I wrote to Madrid to Don

Pedro, one of my nephews, entreating he would watch over this interesting young man. Don Pedro came himself thither to conduct Placide to Madrid, and took the sole charge of him. He was then twenty-three years of age. His departure gave us much affliction. He was in the bloom of youth, and remarkably handsome; of the most lively imagination, a feeling heart, and of extreme frankness; yet entirely destitute of experience of any kind. How could we hope he would resist the different seductions which might surround him? but it is himself that you must listen to, to have a proper idea of that concatenation of thoughts and feelings which preserved him from so many perils and dangers. You will find in him," pursued Father Isidore, "a simplicity and a vehemence which give a character and a peculiarity to his very language. Placide is not a savage; he has a very cultivated mind, and great genius and talents. He en-

tered the world with all these advantages, but with a total ignorance of its laws, its manners, the customs of its society, and all the inventions of human industry. Every thing was new to him.

“Endowed with the most happy organization, with a mind properly cultivated to appreciate the refinements of the arts and of the sciences, and sufficiently upright to revolt at any thing which could injure his morals or his humanity; having neither been surfeited nor familiarized by those objects which excite admiration or draw on them censure; he judged of every thing in an absolute manner, with enthusiasm or with horror—it could not be otherwise.”

At these words the Marquis and his son interrupted Father Isidore to express the great desire they had to hear from the mouth of Placide, a history of his life. “As you will sleep here,” replied Father Isidore, “I can promise you that satisfaction. Placide will come and spend the

evening with us, and he will relate to you his whole history.

Shortly afterwards Placide arrived. Our two travellers admired his features, imposing and regular, his natural agreeable air, and the noble mien of this young man, then twenty-seven years of age. On the other hand, Placide, struck with the graceful figure of Adolphus, and the melancholy which overspread his countenance, as well as that of the Marquis, felt a desire of obliging these two foreigners.

Father Isidore, who was accustomed to rise before day, left them together, and went to rest. After half an hour's conversation, Placide consented, sighing, to satisfy the curiosity of these two emigrants. Then putting both his hands on his face, " Ah!" said he, " am I thus going to retrace from my imagination those moments of trouble and delirium, and those tearful sorrows and dreadful recollections I have carefully avoided so

long ; I often think how much I have felt at the sight of civilized society,—that picture which hath so rapidly passed under my eyes. In the happy calm of solitude one may, without any risk, recal to one's mind so many errors, contradictions and imprudencies ! What reasonable being, having a correct idea of the world, can regret it ? But this fugitive happiness, this delirium of hope and of joy, which I have tasted during some instances—how can I find strength to depict them ? I have not been able to forget them. I have subdued my own imagination ; but these profound and indelible impressions treasured up in my heart, will ever remain with me. Now, it is there I must seek for them. Your request is like stirring up the ashes which cover a devouring fire. A burning flame will perhaps escape out of this mysterious hearth, and nothing will resist the explosion. Nevertheless you wish it ; and,

alas! I feel but too many secret charms not to obey you."

At these words Placide, as if silently, for a moment summoning his recollection, briefly began in these terms:

"For more than three years before my journey to Madrid, my abode in the valley had lost for me all its charms. I saw that I was the object of an universal malevolence, and solely because I had endeavoured to render myself useful to my countrymen, in trying to bring to perfection those arts of which we had been shown only the first elements. Vanity was not my motive; in all these efforts, I acted with an intuition directed by the most disinterested simplicity; naturally fond of study, and having only the public good in view; yet was I hated.

"Far as pride may be said to be produced from a sentiment always generous in its own strength, on the contrary it arises from the constrained and tacit acknowledgment of its incontestible inferior-

city, and the shameful impossibility it feels to admire any thing that is great, which leaves in the soul but ingratitude and humiliation; and without doubt the rebellious angels only fell because they envied the great power of the Almighty. As for me, in the animosity of which I was the object, I formed every day the design of seeking out men more equitable than I thought my countrymen were. I doubly regretted the authors of my existence. They would have applauded my efforts, encouraged my studies; and, in short, would have been proud of my success. At last I took my departure, though not without shedding tears, when I received the blessing of Father Isidore and quitted the youthful Inès, who was in six months to become my bride. I loved Inès, but without any passion. Other young girls of her age, going beyond the modesty belonging to their sex, had shown me more lively sentiments, which I attributed solely to that kind of reputa-

tion I gained by those inventions, of which, in the valley, I had been the author. I preferred in the youthful Inès, not her regular and soft beauty, but her pure piety, her innocence, her timid and modest sweetness. I had had very little conversation with her ; for, near one another, our hearts were satisfied ; we were ever silent ; our minds had no communication whatever with each other ; her complete ignorance and the calm of her imagination, did not allow of a relationship more intimate. She would often look at me with the sweetest expression ; would listen to my verses with rapture, often without understanding them, but the sound of my voice seemed to please her. She loved to sing a religious hymn, the words and music of which I had composed. These are all the proofs I had of her love. We loved each other without pain, without uneasiness, and without jealousy ; for nothing opposed the peaceable and monotonous course of

our innocent love ; though I must confess, I have felt it too much since. No! then it could not be called love, at least not that tyrannical and tumultuous love which disturbs our life in the midst of the arts and the pomp and refinement of civilization. That love is enflamed by a thousand obstacles, exalted by all the seduction of talents, by all the charms of mystery, and by all the illusions of an impassioned imagination. Such is the torrent of the valley during a stormy day. Rain, hail and wind, mutually conspire to augment its violence. Its own current is not to be dreaded. Alone it forms but a pure and tranquil rivulet; but the accession of tributary streams, rushing into its bed, change its benevolent direction, sully its crystal waves, and render its course as fatal as it becomes impetuous. Similar is love. Its impetuosity can never be found in the bosom of profound solitude. It is not in nature. It is the

fruit alone of the wanderings of the imagination.

“ At last I set off, well persuaded that I should find in the great world, the perfection of all our moral virtue, as well as all the arts and all the sciences.

“ The journey had nothing troublesome for me; thanks to the goodness of Father Isidore ! One of his nephews, called Don Pedro, came to this valley to fetch me, and took me with him. I was dressed in a coat similar to his, and which encumbered me considerably, but I thought that in time I should accustom myself to that inconvenience. About a league from this place, we found a carriage, and this rolling machine appeared to me so wonderful a piece of mechanism, that I spent about half an hour in examining it. Notwithstanding I found myself very ill at ease in this vehicle, for beside the continual fear I was under of being overturned, I felt violent pains

in my legs, and shiverings which made me cruelly suffer.

Don Pedro is a man about forty-two years of age, virtuous, well informed; and his soul is as beautiful as his mind is enlightened. His conversation interested me greatly, and he was much amused with my extreme ignorance. I knew that the spontaneous riches of nature was not common in the country to which we were going, and that to live there money was necessary. Don Pedro had plenty, and it appeared perfectly natural to me that he should pay my way for me. I thought that no one could hesitate to act thus towards those who had none; that Christians could not conduct themselves otherwise; and that I should have insulted Don Pedro if I had thanked him.

“ I imagined that the first village we traversed was a great city through which we were passing, and I enquired whether

it was possible that Madrid could be better built.

“ At the second post, when we stopped to change horses, I was much agitated by a spectacle, as afflicting as new to me. Don Pedro sleeping most profoundly, I was leaning on the door of the carriage, looking with curiosity on every thing which presented itself to mine eyes. We were at the extremity of the village, and directly opposite to a baker's shop, when a woman covered with rags, and carrying two young children in her arms, approached our vehicle, and begged alms of me, saying in a lamentable voice ‘ That she and her children were dying with hunger.’ What! cried I, do not you see that quantity of loaves? go and take some.—‘ Alas! I will not be suffered.’ How? said I; in the situation you are in?—Upon saying these words, I opened the carriage door, jumped out, flew towards the baker's shop, and seized a large loaf, giving it to the poor woman; at

the same time saying to the baker, my good friend, you see I have not taken this loaf for myself, it is for this woman, who is poor, and complains she is hungry. 'Pay me then for it,' replied the baker. I cannot, I have no money; I tell you again, it is for this unfortunate woman. 'We have many other poor, and I cannot give to all,' said the baker. As long as you see any poor and have bread, you must give it,' said I. You only sell it to the rich to enable you to supply the poor. 'In this manner,' quoth the baker, 'our trade would truly go on well.'—Yes! said I, for God would bless it. At these words, the poor woman fearing the resentment of the baker, wished to return the loaf, which he was going to take hold of, offering her a smaller one; but I opposed it. She shall have the one I chose for her, cried I, dragging the larger loaf out of the hands of the baker, who furious, instantly called his two men servants, and

they came running to his assistance: I valiantly defended myself with the very loaf I had made a conquest of; I broke it upon the baker's shoulders, whom I threw down, and overturned at the same time one of his men; I seized the other by the throat, and hurled him to the other end of the shop. My physical strength filled them with fear, and I was left master of the field of battle, when Don Pedro, awakening by the noise this scuffle made, ran up to me to demand an explanation.

“ I was so confounded, that he did not partake of my indignation against the baker, that I remained immoveable and dumb. Besides I had, for the first time in my life, put myself in a passion; for in the valley, it hath not been known that any ever quarrelled or fought. I was as uneasy as I was angry, for I feared I had dangerously wounded my adversaries; but I soon saw, to my great pleasure, that they had escaped with a few slight con-

tusions. Don Pedro easily appeased them by his liberality, and gave also to the poor woman the loaf I had broken in her cause, and some money besides.

“ Every one was satisfied except myself; for passion still suffocated me, and I was sorry at having ill treated my fellow creatures.

“ Before I entered the carriage again, I threw on the shoulders of this poor woman, a large scarlet mantle Don Pedro had given me, saying to her, this will do to cover you. But as I performed this action, the people who had by that time come around us, began to laugh at me, as crazy; and I really believe that at that moment Don Pedro himself imagined that he had undertaken a difficult task, when he took charge of me. When we were in the carriage, notwithstanding his perpetual serenity of mind, he spoke to me in a manner rather severe, saying, ‘ Placide, this is a very strange scene; to relieve a poor woman you have run the

risk of killing two or three men. What right had you over the property of that baker?' How can any one coolly behold a shop full of bread, and a wretched mother before it with her two children starving? said I. 'This baker,' replied Don Pedro, 'has perhaps a family of his own, a wife and children—do you know the situation of his affairs? How can you tell but he gives in private to the poor? How do you know whether he did not intend to relieve secretly that poor woman? For it is thus one ought to give. You talk of religion Placide; one of its first laws imposed on us is, not to judge evil of our brethren upon simple appearances. And in what part of the Scriptures have you read that we are sanctioned to do wrong, or take even from a miser by force to do a good action?' I am wrong, quoth I, but you must know, that notwithstanding I have read that there were laws for the regulation of civilized society, yet is my mind

not yet familiarized with the idea of the distinction of property. With us every thing is in common. We have not even heard of a barbarous action. ‘ You have more than is sufficient in land and flocks,’ replied Don Pedro, ‘ to support your small colony; but let us suppose a mortality among your herds, and other calamities to invade the valley, which would produce a frightful scarcity, and that you were married to Inès, and were the father of a numerous family, would you not take advantage of your strength and agility, and climb the steepest rocks to gather herbs and wild fruits and return with them to your family?’ Most assuredly, replied I. ‘ And once possessing them,’ interrogated Don Pedro, ‘ would you even give them up to infirm and old men?’ No! without doubt. ‘ Yet you would have been guilty of robbery in so doing, since every thing amongst you is common to all. And since you are consequently bound to divide the produce

of your land and of your flocks equally one with another, you must thence see that the law of simple equality is absurd, since it does not exist in nature. Beside, in civilized life, it would destroy every species of industry. By a supreme decree, by the irrevocable and divine justice, man is condemned to labour; and he is only truly laborious when he has the hope of acquiring wealth, or augmenting his property. In short, it is only by people in a civilized state, that God is perfectly obeyed in this essential point. It is thus that our social laws are more conformable to the spirit of our religion than yours.

“ ‘The idleness of all savages,’ continued he, ‘and the indolence of the Battuécas justifies this opinion. Hence virtue, with all her beauties, can only shine among us; that is, with nations thoroughly civilized. I have just proved to you, that in certain situations you would rob, and be even cruel to your

fellow creatures ; by violating the general law, and leaving to perish the aged, the infirm, the orphan and the widow. In fact, you can never be generous, when you have nothing to give. These are sublime virtues you cannot know.' O! yes, exclaimed I, I can conceive it—the more man rises by his virtues and his genius, the farther he is removed from the brutes, and the more effectually he fulfills the views of his Creator, who hath animated him with his divine breath. The immense superiority of man over the brutes of the field, is one proof of the immortality of the soul. To extend as far as possible our intellectual faculties, is one of our chief religious duties, and fulfils also the end of our destiny on earth. God hath made nothing in vain, and the virtuous employment of our physical and moral powers, is without doubt in his sight, a worthy homage of our gratitude. Human industry honours the Creator, since it brings into action every

faculty we have received from his goodness. To remain, therefore, wilfully in ignorance, is to despise and reject his benefits. God gave us the empire of the universe, because man alone, among all the animated creation, can cultivate the earth and compel her to disclose those treasures which are hidden in her bosom. And man also is alone able to conquer and subdue the most ferocious animals. God has created the riches with which the universe abounds, for the only beings who can enjoy them, appreciate their value, and bring them to perfection. Without man, all the magnificence of creation would be useless, as if it did not exist. Those treasures are scattered over the earth, or hidden in her bowels, to be objects of our admiration or of our discovery. Without doubt,' said Don Pedro, pursuing the train of my ideas, 'the beauty of this grand spectacle is to charm the spectators. Plants are endowed with certain properties, known only to those

who can make use of them. The perfume of flowers is made, but for those whose sense of smelling is delicate. The diamond, the marble and the precious stones, which admit of so high a polish, are not destined to remain buried in the heart of the earth. Every beauty of creation must command our tribute of admiration; therefore those arts which develope and employ them are of divine origin. God taught them to the legislator of his people. He was willing they should adorn his temples. We may say the same of all sciences. Their mysterious elements are all found in nature. We are able to discover certain laws and their results, and to make from them useful applications; but the primary cause remains concealed, and will be always inexplicable. Like that beneficent river,* which fertilizes the land it overflows, but whose source is unknown; science spreads its beneficent influences

* The Nile.

among those who cultivate it, and *the source* is unknown: the wonderful cause of so many supernatural effects is in the all-powerful hand of the Creator, and it is now and it will be always hid from us by an impenetrable veil.'

" I listened to Don Pedro with rapture, and his discourse made me very soon forget both my anger and my indignation. Ah! exclaimed I, but these reflections are sweet and consoling! ' Yes, to those who know how to admire the sublime works of the Eternal, they will never fail to yield delight and consolation! This noble creature, who owes his existence to immortal thought and infinite love—man, created to know and worship the Author of so many wonders, will ever live. His gratitude is the sure pledge of his happy immortality, since it is a part of the glory of the benefactor, and no part of this supreme glory will ever be annihilated. You must now perceive,' continued Don Pedro, ' that, that

state of ignorance and idleness, in which every thing is in common, is not the state for which man was created, since it favours only those idle individuals, who are deprived of genius and industry. Henceforth you must submit to the customs and laws of countries which are civilized, and never again renew those violences, which would bring us into distress and trouble.'

" I found this exhortation of Don Pedro very rational, and promised him, that I would not any more be guilty of theft; nor would I strike bakers or any one. And Don Pedro, to save me the pain which he thought the sight of a beggar would inspire in me, ordered one of his servants to go on before us, and give alms to every poor being he met with, on condition not to approach our carriage. The remainder of our journey presented nothing but sights as agreeable as they were surprising. Every place we stopped at appeared to me delicious, even the very

worst inns. I was never tired in admiring the furniture, the apartments, and politeness of those who received us. The meals were to me so many feasts ; therefore, the very first evening, I was so ill after supper, that I resolved I would moderate my appetite for good living. I would not drink any wine, which I looked upon as a strong liquor, of whose effects I was then ignorant ; but Don Pedro persuaded me that, where there were cooks, the use of wine was indispensable. He made me drink half a bottle, which completely intoxicated me. I was so ashamed at having lost, for some hours, so entirely my reason, that I made a vow I would renounce that dangerous drink for ever, and I have kept my word.

“ We arrived at Madrid at night. I was ushered into the elegant house of Don Pedro, where every thing was very sumptuous ; but being much fatigued, I hastened to bed. The softness of my bed kept me awake all night. I was so ill,

and looked so poorly the next day, that he wished to send for a doctor to me. No! no! replied I, for if you take from me this fine bed, all its useless furniture, and allow me to make more use of my legs and give me less of your dainty fare, I shall soon recover my health. In short, I would not shut myself up any more in these carriages, apparently so commodious, but in which people are smothered.

“ I was charmed with the interior economy of Don Pedro's house; every thing there inspired order, peace and virtue. Don Pedro was a widower and without children. His elder sister, who had never been married, lodged in the same house with him, in the most agreeable union, partaking with him in his assiduities in the education of his three nephews, young orphans, the oldest of whom was but ten years of age, the sons of a brother he had lost.

“ I had promised to Don Pedro, never to go out without him; and the day after

our arrival, he took me on foot to a church. In traversing the streets I was tempted to stop at every thing which offered itself to my bewitched imagination. The exclamations which escaped from my lips, and my astonished air, drew on me the attention of all the passengers.

“ When I entered the church of Las-palessas,* I was penetrated with an inexpressible sensation ; but when I heard the organ uniting its grand and solemn notes to the religious hymns which were sung by the choristers, I immediately felt as if I was transported into heaven. I fell on my knees, and remained motionless for above three quarters of an hour. At length Don Pedro dragged me from this extacy, and was obliged to lead me with a kind of violence through the church ; but I wished to remain there, to admire at my leisure, the paintings, the statues, and the architectnre, whose boldness

* A modern church, one of the finest in Madrid, and filled with excellent paintings.

and grandeur confounded my imagination.

“Whilst I was resisting the efforts of Don Pedro, the people departed from the temple in crowds, and we were very soon left alone in this vast edifice. I perceived a woman veiled and enveloped in black long garments. She was kneeling and praying over a tomb of pure white marble. I could not discover the features of her face, but her attitude so pious and so graceful, and the elegance of her figure, struck me forcibly. I advanced towards her and was going to kneel by her side when this unknown lady lifted up her veil to look at me, and disclosed to me the most charming face I had ever beheld. Her cheeks bathed in tears resembled the fresh leaves of the eglantine while moistened by the morning dew. Her languishing looks and all her features expressed sorrow! Who are you? said I to her—are you entreating God to restore the health of your father and your dear

mother ; or are you praying for the return of some absent friend ? tell me and I will pray with you ! At these words she appeared surprised ; and, after a moments silence, ‘you behold me’ said she, ‘kneeling on this tomb : it is the tomb of my husband.’—How much he must have regretted life ! What ! so young are you then a widow ? ‘I have been so these eighteen months.’ And this magnificent monument is his tomb ! O ! noble power of the fine arts, which perpetuate such interesting recollections ! In our valley, death brings along with it a lasting forgetfulness of the memory of its victim.—No durable traces of our existence remain there.—A small mound of earth and a wooden cross ! These are our tombs ! Branches, with their foliage, broken off from the trees, form our habitations : a storm, or the northern blast, will, in one moment, level them with the ground ; a cloud, or the feeble vapours of the sky, will suffice to overturn our fragile dwellings, and

scatter, to the ends of the valley, the dust which had concealed our mortal remains! Our children trample with indifference that earth from which they derived their nourishment, and the grass which grows over the ashes of the short lived beings who gave them existence! Every vestige of our rapid passage in this life, and in the valley, is speedily forgotten, and for ever obliterated from the recollection of the survivors; nothing recalls to their mind that we have lived, for our name dies with us!—And I read upon this tomb of marble and bronze your husband's name! Ah! if he still exists, his countrymen can never forget him, yet you weep for him!

“Whilst I was thus addressing her with a trembling voice and an agitated heart, this unknown looked at me with an expression of the deepest astonishment. Don Pedro who had stopped some steps from us, and who had regarded us both attentively, advanced, calling me to him.

‘What!’ exclaimed he, discovering the stranger; ‘Donna Bianca?’ She arose, approached Don Pedro, and I perceived she was making some inquiries of him. Don Pedro whispered some answer in her ears which I could not hear; but Donna Bianca making a sudden movement indicative of her surprise, and fixing her fine expressive eyes on me, looked at me with all the demonstrations of a benevolent curiosity. Don Pedro conducted her to her carriage, but before she stepped into it, she turned towards me, and said with a smile full of meekness, she should dine with Don Pedro, and should be charmed to see me again. Her last expression was so pointed and so remarkable that I feared I had misunderstood her. I questioned Don Pedro on the subject, who smiled and said ‘that she would in reality be delighted to converse with me, because she had found me a perfect original, and wished to gain some information from me respecting the valley of the Battuécas.

Donna Bianca Xenila, is a widow only twenty years old; her husband was one of the greatest lords at court. He died three years after their marriage. Donna Bianca, young, rich, as beautiful as an angel, and gifted with the most brilliant talents and accomplishments, disdains every homage which is paid to her.—She appears inconsolable, and declares that she will devote her life to the arts, to the sciences, to friendship, and to virtue; but that she will preserve her freedom. You will often see her at my house. She is our neighbour and the intimate friend of my sister. Her sense and her piety, her charms, and her passionate love of literature are unrivalled.”

“Thus conversing with Don Pedro, he led me through the streets to an assembly which he called, a literary academy. We entered a large saloon, filled with the most distinguished characters of both sexes, to be found in Madrid. ‘Do you see,’ said Don Pedro to me, ‘all these

men sitting round that long table? They are all men of letters, who, by their talents, are the honour of Spain. Pray look at that man who holds a roll of paper in his hands; he is a poet of very great reputation. He is just going to read a fragment of one of his compositions on agriculture.' ”

“This poet then read some verses which were listened to with enthusiasm. Whilst he was being applauded, I felt an inexpressible sensation caused by admiration, and the chagrin which crossed my breast, that I had not done so much. I admired equally the talent of the poet and his dazzling reputation, which had brought so many enlightened geniuses together to listen to him. Here! said I—Here are divine verses, and here are men worthy of hearing them—Here are true christians, incapable of base jealousy. Ah! why should so noble an example be lost to the Battuécas! Ah! why, do they not all now witness it! The love and the

approbation of one's countrymen ! that is true glory—I have been a stranger to it—This glory is intoxicating !—Genius alone is worthy of it ! We cannot enjoy it, if ingratitude withholds it ; it is the public discrimination alone which can bestow it. These exclamations were not heard by the company, because they escaped from me in those moments of tumultuous applause.”

“ It was in vain that Don Pedro exerted himself to calm and silence me : I was beside myself. The expression of my countenance, and my gestures, had arrested the attention of several persons around us. Don Pedro noticing the curiosity of which I was the object, hastened to drag me away from the assembly as soon as the poet ceased reading.

“ My fate however was to undergo at his house another kind of enchantment, but much more dangerous. He received to dinner five or six gentlemen and ladies, but among that number I saw no one ex-

cept Donna Bianca. In short her beauty eclipsed all. She was no longer covered with black crape, for having laid it aside above a year, she only put it on for an hour every morning, to mourn over her husband's grave. All the other ladies were magnificently dressed. Donna Bianca wore a robe without any ornaments, nor did any jewels set off her charms, except bracelets and a necklace of pearl. Her head dress consisted of her beautiful auburn hair, plaited and bound up by a wreath of flowers. She advanced towards me and spoke with a kindness so expressive, that my emotion did not allow me to answer her. She looked at me with an astonishment that bespoke the sensibility of her heart, and instantly mingled with the rest of the company. I followed her with my eyes, but stood motionless and dumb where she left me, breathing with delight an unknown but intoxicating perfume which her presence and language ever created.

“Don Pedro had informed all his guests of my ignorance, for every one of them looked at me with interest and curiosity, especially as Don Pedro had introduced me to them, as his friend. When the company had seated themselves at table, Donna Bianca placed me beside herself, which produced a violent sensation in my frame. Solely occupied in looking on and listening to her, I forgot to unfold my napkin and even to eat. She apprised me of my mistake, smiling, and I eat only what her hand offered me; that charming hand whose delicacy I admired, imagining that, for the first time, I had seen a woman's hand.

“The conversation turned upon literature; and she said ‘since you are fond of poetry, listen to those two men;’ at the same time denoting their place at the table. I shall be very glad said I, to listen to their conversation, but, for this hour past, I have had but one thought and one sentiment which have left no room for

any other ideas. Donna Bianca with a downcast look, heaved a sigh; that sigh made me shudder; a sensation hitherto unknown to me, and a thousand groundless fears, wrought in me an indisable pain.

“The conversation having now turned upon the poet I had so much admired at the academy, I was as much surprised as indignant, to hear the two literati whom Donna Bianca had pointed out to me, tearing to pieces the work and the author with as much injustice as animosity. I then discovered with sorrow, that knowledge is no preventative against envy. I took the liberty to contradict those two detractors of such brilliant talents. I cited more than thirty admirable verses I had still retained in mind: I spoke with an energy which disconcerted my adversaries; for they had not expected to find in a Battuécas such a taste for poetry. I was transported beyond myself, not because I was listened to with surprise and

approbation, but because Donna Bianca was proud of my success. Rising from table, she said to me, in an under voice, ‘ You have had a fine triumph, and I have participated in it.’ The only triumph I have enjoyed, said I, you have this instant afforded me. She coloured, and immediately entered the saloon. I remained petrified. I was completely lost; my head was not strong enough to bear that sudden revolution which was taking place in my ideas and especially in my heart—that heart burning and pained with agitation: I could not venture to interrogate it: but it spoke with so much vehemence that I was compelled to listen to it in spite of my utmost endeavours. I was in a stupor of which I could foresee the folly and danger; but was drawn in by an imperious charm, which I then felt it utterly impossible to resist.

“ Don Pedro came to find me: he embraced me saying, ‘ that he was enchanted at the success which I had just obtain-

ed.' He added that 'my company was desired in the saloon as some music was going to be performed.' I felt that I ought to repress my feelings, which I did; and followed him. As we entered the room I perceived Donna Bianca seated at a piano. I now began to distrust myself, and stood at a distance from her. As soon as I heard her play with a divine superiority, I felt an overpowering sensation mixed with sufferings which deprived me of respiration. I formed guilty vows, and I was without hope. Organised to love the arts and sciences, I had never heard any music out of the church, except the rude pipes and timbals practiced on by the Battuécas, and of which I had been the inventor. I was now listening to enchanting music; performed by an angelic being, endowed with all the gifts of heaven; performed in short by her I admired with all the enthusiasm and astonishment,—with all the sincerity of a heart entirely new, and with all the ardour

of a passionate soul. She was playing an *adagio* with so much expression, that to me it appeared but the pathetic language of love and of melancholy. She seemed to speak to my heart, as if she desired to console me; for she mourned with me; her music was in time with all the feelings of my soul. My tears flowed plentifully though I was not aware of it; all eyes were fixed on me, yet I did not observe them: I was wrapped up in surprize, admiration and joy; on Donna Bianca my soul—my eyes—were immoveably fixed. All present attributed to the charms of the music the condition I was thrown into. They all knew that this impression was entirely new to a Battuécas. In vain did they entreat Donna Bianca to sing.

“Don Pedro then praising my voice, requested I would sing a piece of music that I had written purposely for Inès, and which I had called *The Farewell and Vows of Love*. I shuddered at this request—I grew pale—and all the arrows

of remorse at once pierced my heart. As I remained silent, Don Pedro related to the company my engagements to Inès. He had seen her—he extolled her beauty—her ingenuous graces, and her tenderness. During this recital, I felt as if I was sinking into the earth. I shrunk as if I was being crushed into nothingness. My extreme agitation struck every one. They all thought it was caused by my regrets. I took advantage of their error. I instantly returned without lifting my eyes on Donna Bianca, I thought I was not worthy of looking up to her. I shut myself up in my room, and under the pretence of a sick-head-ach, I remained there the rest of the evening, and abandoned myself to the torrent of distressing thoughts which carried along with them all my faculties. But notwithstanding my remorse, and the confusion which they produced, my greatest sorrow was, that Donna Bianca had now lost the good opinion she had formed of my sentiments

towards her, for her looks had spoken to my heart. Resolved to persevere in my duty, I yet wished she should know the full extent of my sacrifice; for I must say, there was in my imagination such a train of new thoughts, dellusive and chimerical hopes, that I had but one distinct idea, which was, that my destiny was wholly overturned.

“Next morning Don Pedro came to inform me, that he would be delighted to shew me a superb collection of pictures belonging to Donna Bianca; that she had been apprised of our visit, and would expect us. ‘It will be for us a new pleasure,’ pursued he; ‘it will be a treat to us to witness the impression those paintings will make on you.’ My feelings were too acute to make him any reply: we went out instantly.

“The magnificent mansion of that lady was in the same street in which Don Pedro lived; therefore we were soon at her door. After having passed through

several anti-chambers, we entered into a charming study, and were told that Donna Bianca would soon join our company.

“ ‘This study, ‘said Don Pedro, ‘is filled with the works of Donna Bianca alone. All these flowers have been painted by her.’ ”

“At these words I approached them, and remained in an extacy, admiring those exquisite paintings. What bloom! How natural! What deception! But see! these real flowers on this table ~~have~~ have not more freshness and beauty! Don Pedro smiled—‘These flowers, which you so much admire, are also illusions produced by Donna Bianca: touch them.’ I obeyed, and was wonderfully surprised, for I had never seen artificial flowers before. Enchanting magic of the arts and of genius, cried I, to what height you can exalt a human creature! I congratulate myself on not being familiarised from my infancy with all these prodigies, since I can now admire them with all the as-

tonishment and enthusiasm they merit. 'Turn round,' said Don Pedro, 'and you will see a very interesting portrait: in this room it is the only work that hath not been produced by the hands of Donna Bianca, for she only paints flowers.' "

"At these words I felt a painful sensation. I instantly thought I should see the portrait of that adorable husband whom Donna Bianca always mourned. But I entirely lost that idea, on looking at the picture, which represented a man of sixty years of age. This interesting and dignified countenance said I, is without doubt that of Donna Bianca's father? 'No!' replied Don Pedro, 'it is that of the husband she mourns.' Her husband! 'Yes! he was fifty-five years old when Donna Bianca preferred him to all the noble men, the most brilliant at court.' Then she is not shedding the tears of early, tender love? 'No! esteem, admiration and gratitude decided her choice: she has never known love!' These words,

she has never known love, engraving themselves on my heart, diffused there a maddening joy, and effaced from my imagination every other thought. ‘Donna Bianca,’ replied Don Pedro, ‘an orphan from her birth, was brought up by her uncle,* who acted as her guardian, and who gave her the most finished education. This guardian, by his paternal care, his good sense, his virtues, the glory which he acquired as a warrior and as a statesman, inspired in his pupil the most tender veneration and the most profound attachment. When Donna Bianca had attained her seventeenth year, her guardian pressed her to make her choice

* *Donna Bianca fut élevée par son oncle*, is the phrase in the original. But by the canon of the catholic church an uncle could not marry his niece, yet was there no breach of the ecclesiastical law in Donna Bianca's being married to *her uncle*, for *son oncle*, illustrated by the well-known phrase, *il est mon oncle à la mode de Bretagne*, expresses no more than, that this respectable man was the first cousin of her father or mother.

among her suitors.—At the same time he informed her that by her marriage contract he would settle on her all his fortune.—The only answer she could return, was, to offer him her hand, which, for such unwearied kindness he might dispose of as he chose.—He accepted it himself. What were my sensations and delight at hearing this recital? for, then, I fully knew the angelic soul of Donna Bianca. I secretly said to myself, she had then no love for him she mourns, therefore, she must be alive to a more tender sentiment!

“ In about half an hour Donna Bianca appeared. She blushed at seeing me. Our eyes met, and in that moment I lost all my fears. I forgot the valley. I felt so happy that it was impossible a painful thought could offer itself to my mind. We were conducted into another apartment, filled with beautiful historical paintings, whose charms were lost to me, because they were not the works of Donna Bianca. All appeared cold and unmean-

ing in comparison to her works ; and besides, an invincible absence of mind, did not permit me to pay the least attention to what had no connexion with herself.

“ In about three quarters of an hour a servant came to Don Pedro, to inform him, that a gentleman to whom he had given the meeting was waiting to see him. As there was still another apartment to be seen, Don Pedro smiling said to Donna Bianca, ‘ I shall now renounce my charge as mentor, and confide Placide to your care, madam ; and when he has seen all the curiosities of your mansion, he can return home by himself and without any guide, since there is but a step to my house : ’ so saying he left us.

“ When I found myself alone with Donna Bianca, I felt an indescribable emotion ; for it struck my mind, at once, as if that unexpected, sudden meeting, would decide my fate, and determine my future happiness in this life. I trembled so much, that I was obliged to lean on

the back of a chair, and Donna Bianca, noticing the alteration in my countenance, instantly said to me, in a trembling voice, ‘What is the matter?’ O! said I; if you cannot see it, you will never know it! How can I tell it you, since no human language can express it? At these words, I perceived Donna Bianca was greatly agitated. ‘Let us be seated,’ said she. O! cried I, sinking on a chair,—the admiration you inspire me with is so tumultuous! What successive and rapid emotions of joy, fear and sadness it excites!—What fleeting happiness!—What dazzling days!—What dreadful darkness is yet before me!—It is not a passing cloud, for the storm will only end with my life!

“ ‘Placide,’ replied Donna Bianca, ‘you are not yet acquainted with our manners, our customs, and our refinements; and even the expressions you make use of are foreign to our politeness. I forgive you, but I must not listen to

such language. Let us change our conversation.' The tone of her voice softened the severity of her words—and yet I was chagrined. I put both my hands on my face, and made no answer. After a long silence, 'Placide,' said she to me, 'I am not angry; break this mournful silence!' You forbid me to speak of you, what can I say? 'Speak of the arts you are so partial to.'—Yes! because you excel in them, said I. 'And poetry, which you are so fond of speaking about. I have a violent desire to hear some verses of your own composing. I am sure they must be perfectly original.' These words gave me much uneasiness, for I mortally dreaded Donna Bianca would ask me for the verses I had composed for Inès, and which I had declined to sing the preceding day. She understood my thoughts by the expression of my countenance, and willing to give another turn to my feelings, said, 'Hear me; we will make a bargain. I will sing you an admirably

beautiful piece of poetry, which I have set to music; and then you will repay me by repeating some verses, such as you please; provided they be your own composition, they will please me much.' At these words she arose and went to a piano, which was at a few paces from us.

" ' The verses I am going to sing,' said she, ' are by an anonymous author, a poet of great genius, and yet unknown to all the world. All his poetry is of a religious cast, and of the most sublime sentiments. I prefer it to all the verses I have ever known. I find in them an elevation of style and of thought, and an originality of expression and grandeur, which raises me above myself; and the ode which I have chosen appears to me the master piece of this beautiful collection.'

" Happy poet, said I, sighing. ' Yes!' replied Donna Bianca; he is really happy in having received from heaven gifts so sublime, and especially so, in having

made so noble an use of them! In this piece, which you shall hear,' pursued she, 'it is the poet himself who speaks. Seated upon a rock, in a rural and solitary abode, he sings to the first rays of the sun, the beauties of nature and the benefits of the Creator.' At these words it struck me that I had also made an ode on the same subject; and I sighed again, thinking that it was without doubt much inferior to this piece, which caused me such lively admiration.

"After making a short prelude, Donna Bianca began to sing, in the most ravishing strains. I listened with a painfully pleasant delight as she proceeded. I recognised, ere long, the ode I had composed; my blood boiled in my veins; for what I then felt surpassed so much all the ideas of glory and of happiness which I had conceived, that I feared I was deceived by a dream, or an illusion of fancy. With open mouth, my eyes fixed on her, breathing with pain, I remained immove-

able, intoxicated by an inconceivable charm, listening to a divine voice, expressing my thoughts, and even blending her own with them, in giving them that enchanting melody which she herself had created!— This agreement of our sentiments appeared to me to be the most intimate union of our souls.

“ In short, at the middle of the sixth stanza, not being able any longer to contain my transports, I fell at her feet, declaring that I was the author of these verses. ‘ Great God!’ exclaimed she, ‘ you are that unknown poet! I should have guessed it myself!’ I recited to her the remainder of the ode; after which I mentioned, that I imagined Father Isidore, to whom I had given these pieces, had had them printed during his last journey to Madrid. While I was speaking Donna Bianca, greatly moved and trembling, listened to me in silence. I saw her tears flow. O! supreme felicity, cried I, are you really the same, but much

more interesting than when heaven first presented you to my eyes! Do I see you bathed in tears! And these tears caused by me! That sensibility you evince is excited by me! Before you knew me, your very heart was united to mine. You partook of these effusions of my soul before you knew me! While we were unknown to each other and far separated, while I was shut up in the savage abode which gave me birth, while I was seeking the most lonely solitudes to meditate in secret; an invisible tie united us to each other. You were repeating my inspirations, and you were infusing into the words which I had uttered, the charm of celestial harmony! How often bath the echo of the valley answered my voice, and made my heart palpitate! Ah! what was my presentiment then! No doubt it was you I heard! 'Yes,' said she, 'I ought indeed at first to have discovered in you that original poet, who inspired in me so much enthusiasm; that

only being on earth, who owes his talents to nature alone, and whose irresistible ascendancy sways the mind ; that soul as ardent as ingenuous ; that vehemence, that sincerity, and that passionate language ! O ! Placide,' continued she, ' you, the object of my most lively admiration these four years !—You, whose noble soul hath exalted my imagination and the strength of my mind !—You, in short, to whom I owe the contempt I feel for the world and its frivolities !—You, to whom I am indebted for the taste I feel for solitude ! How sweet will be my task to publish to the world, that you are the author of these exquisite poems, and to hear openly admired, a talent so deserving of universal applause !' No ! no ! interrupted I, it is a secret I will confide to you alone. Glory and renown I desire to find in your approbation alone. You render me insensible to every thing which does not come from you. I am determined henceforth to write but for you. With what

ardour I will labour to perfect that talent, which has been admired and felt by you. With this idea I will go beyond all my powers—and my talents, known only to you, I will enjoy that obscurity which secret instinct hath so often bid me emancipate myself from. Ah! the more that celebrity has had charms for me, the more I love to think that I sacrifice it to you.’

“Speaking thus, I was still kneeling before her, and I held both her trembling hands in mine. She started suddenly, on hearing a carriage enter the court yard; O! rise! said she, and let us hide our emotions and sensations, if possible, from the eyes of indifferent persons’ ‘What!’ cried I, ‘are we then to be separated, when I had so many things to tell you of?’ ‘Return to morrow,’ answered she, ‘at five o’clock in the evening.’ At these words I arose—she pointed to a door, by which I was to go out;—and I hurried away.

“I was in a state of stupefaction which did not allow me to make any rational reflections. I passed that day and a part of the night making verses for her, which I sent to her next morning, at day light. In short, I counted all the minutes itll five o'clock, and then I flew to her. I was led through her mansion into the garden, where Donna Bianca waited for me. I found her seated on the side of a piece of water, surrounded with vases and statues, and I saw for the first time of my life a *jet d'eau*, some of the finest pieces of sculpture, and all the embellishments which art had employed in this superb garden.

“Donna Bianca, in the midst of these wonders, sat on a bench of marble, and augmented the charms of the scene: she offered to my eyes a spectacle the most enchanting which I had ever seen! I stopped to contemplate for an instant the whole of this ravishing picture. Great God! cried I, what enchantment! and

this fortunate country, this delicious abode, is then no more than a journey and an exile! This is, then, the prison where the divine displeasure hath banished guilty and fallen man!—What idea then may not a mortal creature form of his pristine grandeur and his lost felicity!—O! admirable magnificence of the supreme goodness! and this divine face is that of a mortal! It is impossible on looking at her, not to fancy one is still in the garden of Eden! And at these words I sprung towards her and fell on my knees, saying every thing which passion, pure and ardent, could inspire in a heart the most sensibly affected by the novelty of its sensations; for I had never known love!—It would have been impossible to have called my mild and tranquil sentiment for Inès by the name of love.—

“In Donna Brianca, I discovered all the attractions of a rare beauty, and of a superior mind—all the charms of the most

astonishing novelty.—I had only discovered in her the elegance of dress, a mind well cultivated, manners full of all the graces of civilization ; in short, all her talents seemed to me so many prodigies.—Born to be loved and admired, it was I alone who could appreciate all her charms and accomplishments with that degree of enthusiasm they were entitled to receive. She knew this well, and it contributed not a little to exalt her sentiments for me. She listened to me with the most profound emotion,—and as I besought her to give me an answer, she entreated me to sit down by her side.

“ ‘O! Placide!’ said she, ‘what can you expect or hope? What can be your intentions? You who have plighted your faith to another? You, who in six months are to marry Inès?’ I was thunderstruck by these questions—I had nothing to answer—I remained confounded.—‘Speak’ pursued she, ‘what do you expect?’ To

leave you and to die!—‘No! no!’ replied she, ‘we must live for virtue, to fulfil our duties, to make generous sacrifices, and to thank the Supreme Power who hath opened to us both so noble a career.—Let us show ourselves worthy of this great destiny—let us conquer a passion criminal in you and senseless on my part.—I own, Placide, I love you; and I have never felt but for you that thoughtless, careless sentiment which rises suddenly with so much force, but is not intended to be durable.—You attracted my imagination and subdued my heart. In reading continually your poetry, it was so deeply engraved on my heart, that I have a thousand times said to myself,—if I knew the author, I could not but love him; and even before I made the dangerous discovery, you had already subdued my reason by an originality, a frankness of disposition, an expression and sensibility of feelings, which were entirely your own.—In spite of all the preju-

dices which might oppose themselves to our union, I would be yours were you free !”

“What do you say ? Great God ! cried I, *you would be mine were I free ! Am I then engaged ?—what have I promised ? a sentiment unfelt by me.—I had never seen an object like you in the valley—there, neither love nor admiration is known.—Ah ! indeed, I am no inconstant ! I am not a faithless lover.—This violent and burning flame, I have never felt but for you.—‘ But Inès,’ interrupted Donna Bianca, ‘ without doubt feels for you all this love you have depicted to profess to feel for me.’ O no ! said I, in that obscure place, all our passions are calm ; Inès feels for me nothing more than friendship, and our marriage is not necessary to her happiness.—It is not I, who can believe it—an inhabitant of the valley, a young and handsome youth, hath sued for her hand, will certainly take advantage of my*

absence and gain her heart. He will perhaps succeed and she will forget me. 'That is impossible. And did you think so when you quitted the valley? Did you then wish it so?'—Then I did not think, nor reflect; I merely vegetated.—All was disorder within me—my very sentiments, my very ideas and sensations: I had nothing but uneasiness and presentiments; I wished to travel; that was my reigning passion. Tormented by the instinct of love, it was you whom I sought; you whom I have found! You who have developed my soul and begun my existence. I am yours; what shall I be without you? I shall not be able to love another!

"This conversation was prolonged till dusk, yet it terminated too soon and too sorrowfully for me. Donna Bianca told me that she could not entertain the same idea I conceived respecting a change in the affections of Inès; therefore it would be impossible for her to receive me any more at her own house; but we

might still see each other at Don Pedro's." She desired me not to intrust him with our secrets, promising me, weeping, an eternal friendship, and adding that she would do every thing in her power to conquer a passion which her reason condemned, and which she had involuntarily owned to possess her soul.—I could not condemn resolutions which I admired,—her virtue reanimated mine, though it elevated my soul and tore it asunder. I listened to her, and shedding torrents of tears, I quitted her house, the most unfortunate of all men and more in love than ever."

" Consumed by the most profound sorrow, yet supported by the certainty of being loved, though my hopes of success were doubtful, my only consolation was drawn from my desire of prosecuting my studies in the sciences and the arts. It seemed to me as if in acquiring instructions and perfecting my talents, I should approach the nearer to Donna Bianca,

and that that was the legitimate way of identifying myself with her. I saw her the day following at Don Pedro's.—My agitation was inexpressible.—I kept at a distance from her.—I dared hardly to look at her; besides, it was not necessary, for she was ever before me. In short, the sound of her sweet voice would of itself have been enough at any time to paint to my imagination her lovely face. When told that she looked very ill, she answered, that ‘she was really unwell.’ These words pierced my inmost heart. There was something so plaintive in the tone of her voice, and so affecting, that each of her words had a particular meaning for me. The most insignificant formed a mysterious language, which I perfectly understood, and which penetrated my soul with gratitude and love.

“After dinner the company seated themselves round a large card table. This was quite a new sight for me. I at first inquired into the nature of the game,

which I soon easily understood, and for that very reason, it appeared unaccountable to me how people, well informed, witty and sensible, could prefer so childish an amusement to the charms of conversation. They were obliged to acknowledge, that to win money of their friends was the only motive which gave them that preference. But, said I, why do not those who want money ask their friends for some, rather than employ their time so frivolously ; besides, they run the risk of losing against those who are rich ;—all that is very extravagant. They only laughed at me. I grew angry—they laughed still more. Donna Bianca did not play, and she took my part, declaring ‘ she was of the same mind with me.’ I kept silent to listen to her. Thus ended this discussion. . The remainder of the time was spent in play, which gave me a good deal of surprise ; but what were my thoughts even after, when I saw men determined to butcher each other from a

dispute at play, and men too perfectly civilized, commit such crimes in a society enlightened by Christianity, without being banished and dishonoured. But alas! the folly and imprudences of mankind have, since that time, furnished me many other subjects of astonishment.

“ Don Pedro knowing my taste for painting, took me some days after this to see the paintings in the palace, and all the other collections in Madrid.

“ The first time that I saw, in these cabinets of paintings, any ignoble and base compositions, represented by licentious scenes, I felt disgusted. I could not conceive how a painter could spend his time and the fruits of many years study on such trash,—and how he could lower himself so far, when he might have painted some noble and affecting subjects. I found in the choice of these subjects such bad taste and depravity of mind, as shocked my feelings. I cursed the artist, unworthy of such a talent, who could debase

his powers in this manner. My indignation rose so high, that had not Don Pedro been present, I believe I should have torn these pictures to pieces. This discovery of so great an abuse of talent, made me reflect sorrowfully on those arts I had admired with so much enthusiasm; for though invented to elevate the mind, I now saw they might also be employed to degrade, debase, and corrupt our nature; in short, that any of the gifts of nature might be abused.

“ I communicated my ideas on this subject to Don Pedro. ‘ Alas!’ answered he, ‘ you are perfectly right! Music, whose enchanting charms can soften the most savage heart, elevate our piety, dispose our souls to sublime meditations, or raise and animate the courage of warriors, and inspire them with a truly heroic enthusiasm; music, ever degraded, ever lowered, lends her most harmonious combinations to the most despicable subjects; but then without dignity, without genius,

and without power, she offers only painful calculations or effeminate notes! The same may be said of eloquence and of poetry, invented to make us love reason and virtue, or to bring us back to them, when passion hath forced us astray; these immortal daughters of heaven, that have such an empire over the mind, are often employed to mislead and pervert it.'

"What! said I, when life is not long enough to read all the good books, ancient and modern, how can people waste their time in reading pernicious works? What an unworthy and ridiculous loss of time! How is it that the authors of such infamous productions are not the objects of contempt and public execration? 'Their greatest admirers,' replied Don Pedro, 'do not esteem them, but they are dazzled with the brilliancy of their wonderful talents.' What is admiration without esteem, said I,—a barren astonishment, which captivates the fancy, but which the mind disowns. Of what advantage is

talent without some useful object, without morality, without wisdom, and without virtue? 'But their genius,' said Don Pedro.—Hereft of principles, can boast of none, rejoined I. The thoughts of the impious must be abject indeed; those sudden flights to sovereign perfection, those transports of admiration, love, and gratitude, the slave of moral turpitude cannot feel!—He has never tasted those sublime faculties of his being!—O! who can comprehend the incomprehensible corruption of him, who, vitiating the most ingenious inventions, profaning solitude, and perverting meditation, shuts himself up to trace, with reflection and on paper, criminal errors; and who finally prints them to be disseminated among his cotemporaries, and handed down to posterity! 'These excesses are frightful, but habit has familiarized them. It is certain that, having never had an idea of these monstrosities, you have judged much more soundly than we.' ”.

“ This conversation, added to the profound dulness which my personal sorrows had caused me, overthrew every notion I had formed of a perfect state of civilization; and I had yet to be told there were war, the inquisition, and *auto-da-fé*. Those executions, as impious as they are barbarous, inflicted in the name of religion, in the name of that God of peace, whose goodness is boundless, whose mercy is immeasurable !

“ The Saviour of mankind employed no other means to convert idolaters, but those of meekness and persuasion. Not a single word of condemnation ever escaped His mouth against the most criminal of all apostates—that disciple who betrayed and sold Him.—He predicted the crime of that wretched man, but on his head heaped no maledictions. And when He afterwards heard one of His disciples deny Him, a look was His only reproach. When I communicated these reflections to Don Pedro—

“ ‘ Your reasons are very good,’ said he, ‘ but what have you to reply to these? For these two hundred years, France, England, Germany and Italy, have been torn with civil wars, produced by sectaries, innovators, and impious sophists; but Spain has preserved her tranquillity, her doctrines and her religion. No churches have been profaned; the ashes of the dead have rested in peace in their respective graves; no king has perished on the scaffold; the severity of the inquisition has preserved thousands of citizens from the horror of being butchered by their factious countrymen. These facts, and this system of policy, do not forbid the inquisition.’ Yes! but the gospel re-proves such enormities, said I. ‘ I agree to it,’ answered he, ‘ but religion alone is able to repress in a lasting and victorious manner, the abuses of which she is made the instrument and pretence. You see it is so, for in this case, even the voice of humanity cannot raise itself against the

inquisition, since it is proved that without the inquisition rivers of blood would have flowed in Spain as well as elsewhere.' But religion, replied I, forbids us to do evil, that good may come by it; it proscribes every thing like the inquisition. No one will be converted by the sword. The civil law ought to prevent the preaching of impiety and immorality; but, even it hath not the extravagant power to say to the wicked, *instantly believe or thou shalt be put to death*. To take away the life of your brother, because he differs in opinion with you, is to fix him for ever in his error, and to separate him eternally from the Redeemer. Thus to cut off from the life of the sinner, years which might have brought repentance,—thus to prevent the operations of divine mercy, and with a sacrilegious hand to precipitate a fellow creature into endless ruin!—What abominable and execrable impiety! This logic is unanswerable—because it is purely and simply religious; for how beautiful

is this divine precept, *Do what is just without calculating the consequences.* The views of human policy are so circumscribed, that they may sometimes, deviating from established usages, put off for a series of years, very great evils; but, sooner or later Providence punishes injustice.

“ ‘ However,’ pursued Don Pedro, ‘ the inquisition is no more what it was formerly; it prosecutes and punishes those who trouble the public peace; but it doth not sacrifice them;—it is now no more than an exact and severe police.’

“ If I had not been incessantly carried away by an impetuous and domineering thought, these remarks would have inspired me with a much more profound indignation; but the idea of Donna Bianca effaced every thing else from my imagination; the perpetual remembrance of her extinguished every other curiosity. Naturally given to observation, I had ceased to be so. I could, however, still

perceive those things the most striking, and which it was impossible not to notice; but all their shades of colouring, all their details, escaped from me.

“ However, Donna Bianca, in spite of her extreme reserve toward me, wished to see the impression which would be produced on my heart by the representation of a fine tragedy, for she knew that I had never been at a theatre. We went together with Don Pedro and his sister, but the event did not answer their expectations. The manner of the actors, their dresses and their gestures, appeared to me ridiculously affected. I inquired if kings or their confidants acted thus? The delivery of the players sounded disagreeable to my ears; their furious action seemed to me unworthy of majesty and rank; besides, there was in this piece so monstrous a knave, that to me he appeared but the creature of imagination, for he seemed unnatural in every thing he said and did. In short, in this representation,

every thing appeared false or strangely exaggerated. The after-piece, acted more naturally, would have amused me, if I could have laughed; though it contained many things which it was impossible to make me comprehend: as for example, there were two extravagant persons in the piece,—one was called *a fop*, and the other *a coquette*, whose actions and characters, without versimilitude, and full of incongruity in their language, appeared to me entirely unintelligible.

“Some days after Don Pedro took me to another spectacle, which excited the greatest terror in my breast; it was a bull fight. I saw there some ladies, whom I had seen shedding tears at the theatre, where all was fiction, looking on with a keen but cool curiosity, even though human blood was flowing; and indeed, they testified the pleasure this inhuman specatcle afforded them, by all the demonstrations of joy and delight. The excess of my indignation did not suffer

me to wait till the close of this odious exhibition, which was to end by the death of the animal, or that of several men. I hurried out of the place and went home, and shut myself up in my chamber to grieve without any constraint, on this inconceivable ferocity.* The revolting

* The amusements of people of rank chiefly consist in dancing and cards; but the combats with bulls in the amphitheatres have justly been regarded as the most striking features of Spanish and Portuguese manners. That such spectacles tend to familiarise the people with bloodshed seems an idle theory, unwarranted by facts. Modern Italy has no gladiators, but numerous assassins; ancient Rome had scarcely one assassin, but whole armies of gladiators.

The chief actors in the bull-feasts are the picadors, who are mounted on horse-back and armed with lances, and the chulos on foot, who relieve and sustain the other; but the chief personage is the matador, who enters amid the profound silence of the whole assembly, and coolly dispatches the furious animal, by a blow where the spinal marrow joins the head. The death is bloodless and instantaneous, and deserves imitation, as humanity would wish to save pain to the animals slaughtered for food. Sometimes the bull is pierced in various parts with lances, to which squibs are fastened, which being set on fire, the maddened animal stands pawing the ground, while he draws in and exhales volumes of smoke; sometimes an American is introduced, who, after the manner of hunting the wild bull in his own

changes in the taste of these civilized people, was to me a continual subject of astonishment; for on the other hand, I could not but admire the sobriety of their social manners; that agreeableness and meekness in their conversation; those mutual civilities, which are called politeness; their affectionate behaviour, which announced their sensibility; that benevolence, which seems to offer or promise you their friendship; in short, all those little sacrifices, whereby with ceaseless reciprocity they gave up their will to one another.

“In our valley we are kind to one another, but we have not that complaisance, those delicate attentions; nor a language filled with charms. Alas! would I say to myself, all these seductive appearances, are but as the deceitful bark on the tree, a wavering convention of which every

country, throws a rope round the horns, and entangles the quadruped as in a net, then kills him with perfect safety.

Trans.

stranger is the dupe. They seem to have agreed among themselves to act this pantomime, and to dissemble eternally without being once deceived! What madness! Yet I see among them sterling and sublime virtues. The family of Don Pedro offers every example of christian perfection. Don Pedro is an uncle, a tender and watchful guardian, a good brother, an excellent friend, an indulgent and equitable master. He fulfils with exactitude all his duties, and what humanity! what charity! He supports whole families of the poor! He intercedes for and rescues from the dungeons, miserable prisoners! He adopts the cheerless orphan! He procures work to the poor labourer! His liberality is exerted even to the idle! 'We must try,' he would say, 'to reanimate his courage, the dejected mind claims our pity when it is caused by the excess of misfortune; indolence is not wickedness; inactivity hurts no one; it only punishes itself: so far from turning him away

one ought to give the poor and unemployed relief, for it will be doing a good action. Fly,' he would say, 'with joy to the assistance of him who is fighting against the tempest, you are sure to save him; but do not abandon the unfortunate being who is fainting, and whom you see ready to perish.' Don Pedro's sister partakes his sentiments and good actions; for like the strong woman in the Scripture, her hands are open to the poor in working for them.

"I could see admirable morals in the clergy; bishops establishing manufactories and founding hospitals;* a multitude of men and women consecrating themselves to the education of youth and the service of the sick and the poor. I have been informed of the heroical labours of the missionaries. I learned also that all the arts pay a sacred tribute to the unfortu-

* See the Travels in Spain by M. Bourgoing, and the affecting accounts of the admirable charity of the archbishop of Toledo, and many other bishops.

nate,* at last I knew that Donna Bianca, sensible, generous and beneficent, employed the greatest part of her fortune in relieving the poor.

“These pleasing ideas were without doubt consoling, but they also augmented the surprize caused by the inconceivable irregularities and by the shocking incongruities of this people, and of which I was ever the witness.

“It remained for me yet to see one thing which gave me the most sorrowful sensations. Don Pedro conducted me to the arsenal. I entered those vast magazines, where human industry, corrupted by barbarism, multiplied under a thousand different forms, all the means of destruction that fury could invent; and of which we know nothing in the valley, if you except the bow and arrow, employed only

* In Spain a portion of the receipts of the theatres is always given to the poor, from every company of actors, and indeed at all public amusements collections are usually made for them.

against birds of prey. I had seen at Madrid, men carrying swords, and I was given to understand that they did so, merely, because it was the custom. I believed the same thing on seeing the soldiers handling their firelocks. I had so many questions to make, because all was strange and new to me, that I always forgot to ask the most important I ought to have put.

“But this heap of arms, which I knew destined for war, brought before my mind a terrible spectacle which chilled me with horror. My very hair stood an end on my head, when they explained to me the deadly effects of the pistols, the musquets, the canon, &c.

“Great God! cried I, all this dreadful apparatus is prepared by men, not against monsters, the enemies of human nature, but against their brethren! I imagined that certainly, since such formidable means were employed, wars must be of very short duration and very rare, and

that nations never resolved on declaring against each other, but when they were forced to it by some unknown injustice which made wars the last resort. But the barbarity of these inventions is not the less revolting! At these words Don Pedro smiled at my simplicity, and I was informed, that kings made continual wars on the most frivolous subjects—for title, precedence, to have their flag respected on the high seas, to avenge some silly difference, &c. I was petrified; I could not find terms in which to express my astonishment and my indignation!

“ In departing from that impious place where ferocity heaped up and preserved all these instruments of sanguinary rage, I passed through several streets, and at length arrived in a great square where I found an immense number of people assembled; I asked the reason, and was shewn a scaffold! A miserable creature who, to steal some pieces of gold, had committed the most horrible assassina-

tion, was going to be executed, and all that multitude was waiting there to see the punishment inflicted. Civilized nation, cried I, your sciences and your arts do not counterbalance your vices and your blood-thirstiness! A desert is a thousand times preferable to the vain pomp of your cities, how magnificent soever, where one cannot satisfy his inquiries without witnessing, or being told of some atrocity or some inconceivable absurdity! Those who listened to me took me for a fool; and as I heard some persons behind me laughing, I hurried out of their presence, and, my soul filled with sorrow, I hastened to enter into the house of Don Pedro.

“The agreeable remembrance of Donna Bianca served however to efface these sorrowful reflections. When I represented this angelic creature to my mind, I felt all my misanthropy vanish; and Don Pedro, with the intention of dissipating my gloomy ideas, resolved on making me acquainted with an amusement of which

as yet I had no notion: it was a masqued ball. Don Pedro himself never went to those places of amusement; and, calculating on the pleasure he should enjoy from my surprise, he did not describe this spectacle to me before I was introduced to it: in fine, he brought me there without giving me the slightest hint of it. Before we entered into the ball room, I heard with astonishment a confused noise of shrill and squeaking voices: I fancied the people were quarrelling in earnest. Don Pedro smiled, and assured me that they were amusing themselves much. We entered and I remained stupified at the sight of all those horrible and ridiculous figures. As we were not masked, and as I was already known to several of the company, we were attacked on all sides, and those immediately around us related such absurd and extravagant stories, making at the same time, such ridiculous speeches, that I could only reply to this confusion of tongues by shrugging up my shoulders,

whereupon they assailed me with a torrent of abuse.

“ I disengaged myself from this impertinent group to endeavour to find Don Pedro, who was lost in the croud, and I unfortunately fell in with a host of clowns, harlequins and turks; whom I found a thousand times more stupid than those I had just escaped from; they surrounded me, pursued me, and detained me more than an hour, in spite of all the efforts which I could make to rid myself of them. At length Don Pedro came to my relief. I was deafened by the noise, harrassed by the importunities of my persecutors, and truly in a passion.

“ We left the masquerade, and when we were by ourselves, Don Pedro appeared astonished at my indignation; and then he explained to me that it was a masqued ball we had been in, as also the kind of pleasure to be met with there. ‘Those people we have left,’ said he to me, ‘will remain there all the night; and this

is what we call gaiety and merriment.' Without doubt, cried I, it is the gaiety of bitterness and of an insulting and deep rooted misanthropy, which hath produced this absurd amusement. The misanthropist, unable to divert his leisure hours, found nothing better than to give up the society of men, such as they are, to renounce common sense which he despises, truths which irritate him, and to relate absurdities and even disnaturalize the human voice and figure.

"Don Pedro smiled. 'You have,' said he, 'a medium peculiar to yourself, through which you view objects; but I own that your conclusions on most things are rational enough; and that custom takes away from civilized people much of that correctness of thinking and acting, which their judgments know to be right.'

"From that time I resolved never more to frequent the high world. The disgust I felt for its false pleasures had destroyed

in me all my inquisitiveness, and I became as savage as I was melancholy.

“ One morning Don Pedro entered my chamber, with a look which astonished me. I questioned him as to his uneasiness. He then informed me, ‘ that Donna Bianca had set off for one of her estates twenty leagues from Madrid, with the determination of receiving no one at her mansion, on any pretence whatever.’ Don Pedro added, ‘ that she had entrusted her secret and mine to him; that she had desired him, shedding a torrent of tears, to tender me her farewell.’ What! said I, shall I never see her more? ‘ Think,’ replied Don Pedro, ‘ that duty alone separates you. You are betrothed to an innocent and sensible creature, to whom you have plighted your faith; she relies on your fidelity; she expects you to fulfil your vows.’ I hear you, said I; I will set off this very day.—‘ No! Donna Bianca entreats you to remain here till the time of your return to the valley; that

is to say, not to leave Madrid in less than four months ; and I must be allowed to join my entreaties to hers. She hopes that her absence will tranquilize your mind, and that until your departure, wise and sober reflections, and noble sentiments will restore to both her and you, that peace of mind, which you have mutually lost.' Then she thinks she can forget me ; but I—I will carry in my heart her image indelibly stamped there. O ! why have I left my obscure country ? That wild retreat, where I lived in a happy ignorance will henceforth afford me but a barren wilderness ! Imprisoned far from her in that narrow abode, what will become of me on those rocks, where so many reveries have charmed my youth ! O ! what shall I do with my recollections. She abandons me—she banishes me into exile—she knows not—she falsely accuses my heart—and to me she predicts tranquil days !

“ ‘ She relies upon your virtue, as she

does upon her own. She has foreseen every thing. She thinks, that after having seen a nation highly civilized, and having been made acquainted with our arts and sciences, you can have no relish for the valley. She entreats you will return with your young spouse. She will then give you the estate she hath at this moment gone to inhabit. There she expects you will spend every summer,' pursued Don Pedro, 'and I hope you will make my house your residence during the winters, if, my dear Placide, you can find any pleasure in giving me that proof of your friendship.

" Donna Bianca and Don Pedro were sufficiently acquainted with my ignorance of social manners, and were well aware that I should see nothing but what was very simple and natural in these propositions. I had yet to learn that a generous action could sometimes wound the pride of him who is the object of it, and that it was humiliating to accept what it

was noble to offer. The untutored mind will sometimes foresee many things; but it never guesses at whimsical imprudencies; therefore, this proposal gave me no uneasiness, but I did not accept of it. No! rejoined I, since I am compelled to give her up, I will renounce all her gifts! In this seducing world, where I first saw her, every thing would recall her to my mind, but nothing would represent her to me such as she really is—her charming self. Her divine countenance is perfect in my memory alone. Henceforth I will not listen to any ordinary mind or virtues—inferior talents or any beauties, when she would eclipse them all. I will remain the time she hath prescribed for me. I will in this obey her; but I will flee the world; I will live in the bosom of *your* family, and when you have any visitors I will shut myself up in my chamber. In short, faithful to that determination, I vowed at that moment, that I would instantly shut myself up in that

solitude to which in a few months I was to be for ever condemned. In the mean time, however, I pursued my different studies with much eagerness. I finished in six weeks two landscapes, painted in oil, and though this kind of painting was perfectly new to me, they were so much praised, that I gave them to Don Pedro, who placed them in his saloon. I thought, with pleasure, that Donna Bianca would some day or other see them! However, time fled rapidly away, and with it flew the feeble remains of my happiness, and a vague hope which I still preserved in my heart.

“ I had been four months at Madrid. There remained left to me but two months more to stay there. The idea of returning to the valley, tore my heart asunder. Great God! said I to myself, how shall I look up to that young Inès, forgotten and betrayed! What will become of me, when I lead her to the altar, binding myself by an irrevocable vow, when my

heart is no longer my own! How shall I be able to form this much dreaded, sacred and indissoluble union! And with whom? Inès is lovely; innocent and interesting; but she hath never known love! And what sacrifice do I not make to her? While I am consumed by needless regrets, she is calm and tranquil, and nothing, I am sure disturbs her sweet and peaceable indolence. Perhaps she hath forgotten me! When I recall to my mind the coolness of her last adieus. She shed some tears, it is true—so did I—she is dear to me no doubt—but what serenity did she carry in her countenance, when last I gazed on that lovely face? ‘Adieu!’ said she, ‘I will expect you without fear.’—*Without fear?* Is this the language of love? How can so much security be allied to that impetuous passion, which overturns our very existence? This love which she has, perhaps, never felt for me, she is now experiencing for another? Every thing may have been

done to gain her heart; perhaps she dreads my return. This last idea, which I found ever present to my imagination, was my only hope. I might easily have satisfied my doubts, had I sent a messenger into the valley; for there is neither post, nor any communications whatever with it. No one in this isolated place, ever thinks of writing letters, nor are any ever received: the religious men themselves never go out but on particular occasions, and these happen very rarely: but the fear of recalling myself to the recollection of Inès, always hindered me from sending a courier hither.

“ While in Don Pedro’s house, I lived very retired, dividing my time between poetry and painting. I found that the study of the fine arts was very charming and consoling; and if they do not heal the wounds of a lacerated heart, they will at least soothe its pain, and assuage those violent agitations, which, far from augmenting the energy of our soul, exhaust

its strength, and bring upon it that unmanly depression of spirits, which ends in despair. To give one's self up to continual and constant occupations, is to struggle with courage against sorrow; and he who will persevere must end in being the victor.

“ I often took solitary walks in the environs of Madrid. One day my reveries led me as far as two leagues from the city, and at length I lost myself in a grove of myrtle. In endeavouring to find my way out, the sound of a waterfall attracted my attention. I directed my steps towards it, and entered into a long avenue of lemon and orange trees; this avenue was divided, through its whole length, by a stream of the most pure and limpid water. I perceived at the end of the avenue a rock covered with moss, from which flowed a fountain that formed the stream I was then passing along.

“ Having reached the end of the avenue, I perceived a small new house,

surrounded by laurels, jessamine and orange trees. The delicious perfume of the flowers, the murmuring of the stream, the solitary and picturesque situation of this isolated habitation, excited in me the sweetest and the most pleasing sensations. This charming asylum, ornamented by the graces, must have been chosen by love, said I to myself; it must be inhabited by two happy lovers.

“ I admired the good taste displayed in the proportions of the architecture of this delightful habitation. At a hundred paces from the house, and in the midst of a tuft of flowers arose an altar of an antique form, bearing this inscription.—*To hospitality, to the arts, and to friendship!* Alas! said I, peace is here. There is not a word about love! Supreme happiness is not known here; but one may here enjoy peace! I advanced to the altar, on which I saw two vases of alabaster; the one was filled with milk, the other with fresh and transparent water.

On a bench, placed by the side of the altar, I read these words: *To the wandering traveller*—for no regular road conducted him to this rural and mysterious temple! I was fatigued, I seated myself on this hospitable bench. All on a sudden the clear, sonorous notes of a human voice, accompanied by a guitar, struck my ear. I arose, I advanced towards the house, and leaning myself against an orange tree, I heard a female voice sing a romance, which expressed the pleasures arising from an acquaintance with the fine arts, poetry and music.

“ As soon as the song was ended, a venerable old man came out of the house and approached towards me. He beckoned me to follow him and I obeyed. We entered his house, and he conducted me into a very neat parlour, ornamented with drawings of flowers; but as soon as I saw them I could not help sighing; for their perfection and beauty recalled to my mind those I had seen at Donna Bianca's.

I found in this room the young lady who had been singing ; she was fourteen years of age ; her name was Theresa. Gonzala was the name of the old man, proprietor of this habitation. On introducing me to her, ‘ This is my grand daughter,’ said he, ‘ and the only child that remains to me.’ And as he spoke, his eyes were filled with tears. I saw he was unhappy. I at once discovered in his, a similarity to my own condition ; I pressed his hand in mine ; two feeling and suffering minds soon understand each other. We were now no longer strangers.

“ After a short discourse, I questioned him respecting his manner of life, and he related to me his history ; I had never heard any thing more moving or more tragical ; for he had lost in one year, his whole fortune, and two children whom he adored ;—a daughter, mother of the young Theresa, and an only son. He was reduced to the greatest distress, and the dreadful details of those catastrophies,

served only to aggravate still more the remembrance of them. ‘ I should have sunk,’ pursued this old man, ‘ under all these sorrows, if a delivering angel had not come to my relief. A lady, hearing my deplorable history, though she was in all the bloom of youthful beauty, in the first transport of her sublime piety, declared she would bring me back from the gates of death, or, at all events, soothe the sorrows of my declining life. The wishes of her angelic soul were granted. I was stretched on my couch, and at the point of death. She came—she mourned with us—she clasped in her arms Theresa, then nine years of age—she heaped caresses on the child, and going away, she said, ‘ I am rich, and notwithstanding my youth, I am able to perform any actions pleasing to my heart. I am even encouraged to multiply them ; therefore make yourself perfectly easy ; you shall want for nothing, and your child will receive a good education. Then she left me. Her

visit was to me like a celestial apparition. She sent the very same day a doctor, money, and every thing which could be necessary or indeed agreeable; for condescension is ever mixed with her benefits. They are accompanied with so many attentions, and so much natural goodness, that they have all the charms of the most friendly and delicate gifts. She returned the next day, and enquired, among other things, which I liked best, to stay at Madrid or in the country. I expressed the desire I had for solitude; then she chose this sequestered retreat. She composed and drew the plan of this house, and arranged the interior of it with all the care you observe in it. This tapestry is the work of her own hands. These beautiful drawings have been painted by her. I can see by the emotion depicted in your countenance how much this recital affects you.

“ Well this is nothing compared to what she has done for us since that time. She

wished to be herself the instructress of Theresa, and she came to this house purposely twice a week, to give her lessons on music, drawing, and many other subjects. And with what patience, what meekness, what attention? When I wished to express my gratitude, Father, she would say, consider that heaven hath restored to you a daughter—I am an orphan,—I find in you a father, and it is God alone you ought to thank. In the summer she would often spend two or three days with us, and when at any time she went to any of her estates, she would send us two masters to supply her place, which has lasted till this year,—but as now Theresa, thanks to all her care, is able to study alone, we have declined the assistance of all masters.’ Then she is absent at this moment inquired I, with an inexpressible sensation? ‘Yes!’ answered Gonzala, ‘she has been gone about six weeks back, and for six months’—Great God! cried I let me but have the happiness of hearing

the name of this adorable woman pronounced? ‘I cannot answered the old man give you that satisfaction: this respectable and most beloved name is unknown to us. She always declined saying who she was—but I shall tell you how she managed matters.—Father, she would say, I will add some merit to the pleasure I feel in obliging you. It is painful for me to keep the secrets of my heart concealed from you, but I shall keep my own counsel, without fear of displeasing my Creator. Therefore,’ pursued the old man, ‘I was obliged to respect this unknown lady. At this place we only give her the name of *the Friend*.’—But the masters whom she hath sent? ‘They were her own in her infancy, but they were ordered to be silent, and I was above asking them,’—Yet when she went away, as her absence was to be considerably lengthened, Theresa, able to write, begged permission of corresponding with her. *The Friend* reflected for one moment, and

then said, you shall write to me under a double envelope to the direction which I will give you at Madrid; and I shall take for this correspondence a name which is not my own, but one which is dear to me.'—And what then was that dear name which she hath taken these two months past? '*Placida.*' At this word, I laid my hands on my face and bathed them with my tears. Gonzala and Theresa had seen me so greatly agitated for above a quarter of an hour, that this original and sudden emotion did not surprise them at all, they only imagined that I was under some restraint at the conclusion of their interesting recital. 'My dear father,' cried Theresa, 'will you not permit me to shew this stranger *The Friend's* picture,' 'Yes,' answered Gonzala, 'he is worthy of this favour.'—Theresa instantly untying from her neck a gold chain, to which was suspended a miniature, presented it to me.—I received it with an indscribable sensation, for I instantly saw in this portrait a most striking

likeness of Donna Bianca. Though I had previously no doubt that the friend of Gonzala was Donna Bianca, the sight of her portrait converted my suspicion into certainty ; and my conviction that it was herself, dissipated from my mind the jealousy which had well-nigh found a place in my heart, when I trembled lest any other woman could be capable of actions so extraordinary and so imposing ; for I could not suppose, even in the momentary scepticism I laboured under, that any other female in the universe could unite so much enchanting goodness, so much generosity, so many agreeable qualities : and unknown to me, at parting, perhaps, alas ! for ever, she had assumed the name Placida.—What bitterness of heart—what profound grief of soul, did there mingle in my transports of admiration !—I was going to lose, and for ever, this incomparable woman whom I adored, and who loved me,—I could not endure the despair, fraught though that in re-

nouncing my own happiness, I had involuntarily robbed her of her own ; I still held her portrait and was bathing it with my tears when Theresa took it from me, and it seemed as if she was tearing my heart asunder. Yet reflecting that Donna Bianca had carefully hidden our secrets from Gonzala, I felt that I must preserve the same discretion, and consequently I would not tell my name in a place where love had consecrated it in so mysterious a manner. I recalled to my mind, that one of Donna Bianca's christened names was Theophila, and I told the old man that I was called Theophilus. Before I could tear myself from this house, which was become so dear to me, Gonzala's interest was encreased when I told him that I was an inhabitant of the valley of the Battuécas, and that I meant to return there in a few months hence ; at the same time I begged he would allow me to supply the place of Donna Bianca, and give Theresa lessons in music and painting till my de-

parture. The old man consented to it and I promised to return the next day.

“ I thought upon this occasion I could do no less than communicate my adventure to Don Pedro, who was highly pleased at it. ‘ This noble action of Donna Bianca, does not astonish me,’ said Don Pedro, ‘ for I know her capable of many such: having no relish for the frivolities of the world, possessing a large fortune, and observing an extreme economy in her private expences, she is enabled to give ample scope to all the goodness and elevation of her generous soul. But, my dear Placide, this extraordinary adventure can be of no use to you, and must give you uneasiness. It would be much more rational for you not to revisit so dangerous a solitude; for there you will only think of love, and absence will no longer separate you from Donna Bianca, since, with that old man, you will only see her with augmented charms; and what torments are you preparing

yourself?'---Don Pedro talked wisely, but I was no longer in a state to listen to the language of reason.

"The day following I returned very early to Gonzala's. I carried with me one of my own paintings; it was a landscape, and I placed it with pleasure in his saloon, between two pictures painted by Donna Bianca.—I instantly began to give my lessons with great zeal, for I was replacing Donna Bianca.—The conversation of Gonzala was my reward, for he always spoke of Donna Bianca with admiration. I felt perpetual new and successive sensations, at hearing pronounced this name, which the secrecy of her heart had substituted for her own. How much I was attached to my own name? How proud to be called Placide!—How many new and affecting accounts did I gather from this old man! He told me that Placida had spent the first month of her widowhood with him, and that her sorrow was as profound as it was calm and resigned.

‘ I fell sick at that time, and during eight days her sole occupation was to pray for me, to nurse me, and to give lessons to Theresa. These were her only consolations.’ And do you think, replied I, that she is now happy ? ‘ I know no one more deserving of being so,’ replied the old man, and yet I know that, for some months past, a hidden sorrow preys on her mind. —Her goodness and meekness have remained the same, but she is evidently absent in thought, and engaged with objects which are present to her mind alone. Formerly, when the lesson of Theresa was finished, she would walk with us in the wood, or in our garden, or would amuse herself by cultivating some of our flowers ; but, for these four or five months back, the alteration in her temper is very striking ; it seems as if she had but one single pleasure left, which is to sing a religious ode that she has set to music,—and she is so much affected by the words, that she often sheds tears while singing it.—Theresa one

day begged to have this ode. No, said she, I think no one in the world can sing it so well as myself; I am even jealous of it.—It is the only thing of which I am vain; and I think I can sing it with the true expression which ought to be given to it. Any one may judge of the impressions produced on my mind on hearing this tale.—It encreased that passion which since its birth had over me so much power, and which had carried away with its impetuosity all my faculties. My imagination wandered in numerous extravagant projects, which I was very careful not to impart to Don Pedro;—I feared his austere principles; and I was disposed only to listen to love and consult the violence of my own passion.—Assured in my own mind that I was beloved, I thought that the sentiments of Donna Bianca justified my insanity, and authorised me to form the most ridiculous schemes.

“These ideas floating in my imagination, added to my total ignorance of the

difficulties attending the performance of actions I had not previously engaged with, and did not allow me to form any steady and fixed plan. I was only decided to attempt any thing which might engage Donna Bianca to follow me into some lonely solitude, or even carry her off, if I could not obtain her consent. I was forgetting my own and the severity of her principles. I could only discover in her that sensibility of [which I persuaded myself the object; and I flattered myself every thing would give way to it.

“ I regularly went every day to Gonzala. After Theresa's lessons we used to go into the garden, where I would stay whole hours among the parterres, whose flowers had been planted by the hands of Donna Bianca, in the midst of which was the most charming of all shrubs, with this inscription, *The rose tree of Placida*. How delighted I was to cultivate this tree! Its perfume seemed to intoxicate my senses.

“Theresa had not failed to inform Donna Bianca that the young Theophilus, an inhabitant of the valley of the Battuécas, replaced her benefactress in her music and drawing lessons. Donna Bianca, though astonished that chance had discovered this retreat, could easily guess who this Battuécas was, and that the same impulse which had made her take the name of Placida, should have induced me to take that of Theophilus. Her answer to Theresa, and which I saw, and whose true sense could only be understood by myself, did not convey one word which was not impressed on my heart. I was so agitated after reading this letter, that I hastened to quit the house of Gonzala, a long time before the evening, though against my usual custom.

“I stopped in the wood of myrtles to reflect freely and leisurely on my projects. Here, said I, our mutual sentiments have fixed our destinies; I am loved even as I love; Donna Bianca alone is worthy of

my heart and affections. I know that she is a slave to those habits of civilized society, which I have but recently known from their tyranny, and which I must detest, since they form a barrier between her and me. I am resolved to liberate her from such abhorred chains. And why in this vast universe, of which I have seen only an imperceptible point, are there no uninhabited places, or profound solitudes!—O! that we could find one like the valley! With what transport I would renounce for her those praises; all that thirst after renown which, for one moment, dazzled and seduced my imagination?—I want none of those praises which would add nothing to the merit which Donna Bianca attaches to my talents.

“ These thoughts occupied my imagination so much, that my eagerness for the study of geography was increased; but I only sought on maps for solitary and uninhabited lands, or deserted islands, for

there it was I wished to conduct her for whom I would eternally dedicate my life.

“Determined to conceal all my projects from Don Pedro, I tried as much as possible not to discover the state of mind I laboured under; but unable to dissemble, he soon perceived there was something the matter with me, from the agitation I always betrayed. Every day, on my return from Gonzala, Don Pedro was sure to come into my chamber, and in order to elude his questions, I resolved to spend my evenings in his saloon. Beside his own family, I was always sure to find there much company. Among these was a lady, a relation of Don Pedro, who, though no longer young, was strikingly beautiful. I remarked in her manners, I know not what, something singular and affected, which astonished without pleasing me. But she was always so attentive to me, that I thought I owed her no small share of gratitude. She invited me to go and see her, and I accepted her invi-

tation. The day following, I went to Don Pedro, pretty early, to request her direction, which I had forgotten. Don Pedro smiled, after which, looking rather grave,—‘No, Placide,’ said he, ‘you must not go to see such a woman.’ Why not? ‘Because she is a very dangerous person.’ Dangerous, and yet you receive her? ‘My age and my experience guard me against her artifices.’ And I, what have I to fear from them? ‘Is it possible that you have not found out her meaning? What meaning? ‘That of turning your head, to render you passionately in love with her.’ Do you really think so? A woman thirty-six years of age, the mother of a large family, and who lives in the most agreeable harmony with her husband; a lady whose language is so pure, whose sentiments appear so virtuous, and whom you admit into your society! Ah! Don Pedro, is it you who thus judgest of others! You who are so religious! How can you imagine hypocrisy

so detestable, and such an unaccountable depravity of moral principle! Ah! you astonish me and yet you grieve me. I stopped, for I was so much irritated against Don Pedro that I was fearful of employing expressions too harsh to make known my sentiments. He was silent for some moments, and replying to my reasonings, he said, ' Though our manner of viewing things be very different, yet neither of us is wrong. You must condemn me, though it was my duty to warn you of this danger. Undoubtedly we ought to judge of the conduct of other people on very positive proof. I have none to forbid my receiving her, therefore she is admitted into my family. No palpable misconduct has dishonoured her life, and society tolerates her, which is no more than humanity dictates and religion sanctions. But she is not esteemed, because we have every reason to believe that her conduct has not been the most correct. Before you could comprehend the proof I allude to, it

would be necessary for you to be better acquainted with the world and the rules of society, which you are totally ignorant of, and which I should in vain attempt, at the present moment, to detail to you and instruct you in. I conscientiously believe this lady is dangerous, from what I have observed of her character and her morals, therefore, it was my duty to secretly warn a friend of her snares; and especially a young man, frank and credulous, like yourself, from forming a connection which would be as imprudent as it would be reprehensible.' What! cried I; this woman, who loves her children and adores her husband; this woman, who can paint virtue and expatiate on the duties of her station, is it possible she can be despicable? 'If you had been brought up in the world, even though you are now very young, you would soon discover, Placide, that she neither loves her husband nor her children. Her decency would appear to you but a very awkward prudery;

and her dissertations on sentiment and virtue but a ridiculous affection.' And yet you treat her with respect and friendship? 'Not friendship—O no!—But we owe respect to every woman who is received into society, and particularly to those whom we admit into our houses.' How different this world is from the idea that I had formed of it. What hypocrisy! What deceit under fine appearances! What falsity beneath the garb of politeness! 'For you, my dear Placide, it may be so, but not for minds accustomed to the practices of the world. Such people never mistake ordinary politeness for friendship; nor the common respect, without which society could not exist, for real esteem. In short, you require forbearance, and at the same time, a blunt candour, which, believe me, cannot be practised if you knew the world. You would find, were you acquainted with it thoroughly, that civilized men have well arranged every thing most suitable for decency, agreeableness, and

the good and social order of life ; for almost all the laws and regulations established, in what we call good society, are calculated with so much address and delicacy, that on reflection it is not possible not to admire the judgment and rationality of those principles which have dictated them.'

" In spite of all these arguments, I still disliked society, and felt the world irreconcilable to my mind, because it would not approve of my projects and my love.

" Time, however, was stealing rapidly away. I had now been above seven months at Madrid, and the time fixed for my return to the valley was expired. Donna Bianca was to return in six weeks. Determined to prevent her return by my going to her, I only waited Don Pedro's taking a short journey into the country, when I resolved to put my plan in execution. What is something very extraordinary, at the moment when I was

expecting to engage in this mad scheme, so contrary to my vows, and to my principles, I felt no remorse; it formerly had been very bitter; no new circumstances had encreased it; but I was now a stranger to it; for my passion having arrived at its highest pitch, absorbed every other feeling, and I gave myself up to its ungovernable sway, and only thought of the means by which it might be satisfied.

“ One morning as I was alone in my chamber, I was informed by a servant that one of the religious men of the valley of the Battuécas wished to speak with me. At these words I remained petrified; and as if struck with a thunderbolt! My conscience, plunged in a profound sleep, awoke suddenly with horror! I fancied, for a moment, that this priest had come to demand the fulfilment of my engagements, which I had not only betrayed but forgotten. I felt guilty, and could neither find courage nor excuse,—but a mournful despair seized my facul-

ties. Pale and trembling, I leant against the table. My door opening, I saw before me a religious man, who held in his hand a letter from Father Isidore, and addressed to me. Advancing, he presented the letter. I knew the hand writing at one glance. My trembling hand soon broke the seal. But what were my sensations, when running my eye over this letter, at first with terror, and afterwards with an eager curiosity, I read what follows—

“ MY DEAR PLACIDE,

“ I am sorry to inform you of a most unpleasant circumstance. I must hasten to acquaint you of it, that you may protract your stay in Madrid a few months longer. Banish for ever Inès from your mind—she is no longer worthy of you—she has fled from the valley with a stranger, whose stay was so short here, that no one knows his name. He came hither at the dusk of the evening, and without doubt Inès, far from following the custom

of her sex and age, who shut themselves up in their cottages, sought him ; and, in short, fled away with this man the day following, before sun-rise : a thing unknown in this valley. A note, written and signed with her own name, leaves no kind of doubt on this matter. Let us forget this miserable creature—she has not been seduced—she herself must have made the first advances to this man. No strangers, as you know, can penetrate into the cottages where the young females are, and you are not ignorant that Don Pedro only saw Inès, because he was the father of a family, my nephew, and that I was certain of the purity of his morals. Knowing the firmness of your sentiments and promises, I can conceive your sorrowful surprise, on learning this sad intelligence, and I grieve at the uneasiness this letter will create you. We are now at the latter end of autumn. I advise you to spend your winter in Madrid, and return hither early in the spring. May

your conscience console you my dear Placide; and thank heaven, who hath given you a soul incapable of yielding to criminal passions, and who has endowed you with those generous sentiments, which I am sure would make you prefer death to the violation of your faith and your honour."

"Almost wild with joy and astonishment, after having read this letter, I hastened to discharge the religious man who had brought it; and as soon as I found myself alone, I sunk into a chair and wept profusely. A thousand different sentiments at this moment agitated my soul, but shame domineered over all others. The man I revered the most in the world, thought me incapable of falsifying my word, or yielding to my passions. His esteem was too much for me—I did not deserve it—I scarcely felt the joy of finding myself free again—it seemed as if happiness was no longer in store for me. Alas! I felt myself no more worthy of

knowing and enjoying it—my passion no longer smothering the voice of conscience, since every obstacle was destroyed, I was not then deceived by the illusions of my mind. In short, I hardly knew myself.

“ I could not help pitying the fate of this young Inès, who, without doubt, had been the victim of a seducer. I had now learned to commiserate the errors caused by passion. Had I not loved Donna Bianca as soon as I had seen her! But I was speedily brought to my senses by love and by hope. I found myself unable to drive away from my imagination those late and mournful reflections, and to give myself up to more enchanting ideas. I instantly repaired to Don Pedro, not wishing to add hypocrisy to my other faults, and I made a candid avowal of my secrets to him. This painful discovery of my plans cost me much, yet it was a kind of expiation for my errors, and very much relieved my oppressed conscience. My frankness disarmed the austere severity of

Don Pedro—he was all indulgence and friendship. ‘Dear Placide,’ said he, ‘never forget that in danger, especially, a true friend is a great blessing; and what greater danger is there than that to which we expose ourselves, when we only listen to our passions; for had you opened your heart to me, a single reflection, dictated by honour and friendship, would have been sufficient to have restored you to the full sense and power of your duty. Besides, I should have easily proved to you how chimerical were all your projects; you would never have obtained the consent of Donna Bianca, and that your plan of carrying her away was not more visionary, than that of settling yourself in a deserted island. But let us forget the past and only think on the future, which presents to your view so brilliant a destiny. You are free—Donna Bianca loves you—she will be yours—she has confessed she loves you. A letter, which I have just received from her informs me

that, trying to forget her dreadful dulness of spirits, she has gone into Valencia, where she intends visiting the delightful neighbourhood of that city. It is there we must go and seek her. We shall find her settled on the margin of the sea, in the little port of Grao; and if you please, we shall set off for that place to-morrow with the first rays of the sun.'

"At these words I fell on Don Pedro's neck, embraced him with a transport of joy, and saluted him affectionately. His friendship seemed to obliterate all my faults. Don Pedro assured me that I should be happy, and I no longer doubted it.

"In short, we set off the next morning, and after a journey, which appeared to me unusually long, we arrived at Grao in the twilight of the evening. What happiness was then in store for me. I found myself soon at the feet of Donna Bianca, and before Don Pedro I received her professions of esteem, and I heard her plight-

ed faith flowing from her own mouth. I heard her then vow eternal love. And the day following, as I awoke, what were my sensations, how agreeably pleasing my first thoughts! What joy to awake from sleep, to fill so fortunate an existence! I flew towards Donna Bianca's chamber, and she was already waiting for me. Don Pedro was still asleep, and Donna Bianca knowing I had never seen the sea, proposed to me a walk on the beach. The air was sultry, and the heavens shrouded in clouds. We walked forth by ourselves. I held her arm leaning in mine. A profound silence reigned around us. We were going over a most enchanting landscape, and the emotion of my heart was so violent that it overpowered me, and made even my transports painful to me. Man has more strength to support misfortune than to sustain supreme felicity: weak and short-lived beings, we seem born only to pass rapidly away; and every secret melancholy em-

bitters our most delicious joys! This is doubtless a presentiment of their short duration, and that they will leave us without the chance of revisiting our soul; a presentiment which poisons the sweetest enjoyments of life. Alas! to hope to be perfectly secure in them, would be folly and presumption.

“ I suddenly heard the noise of the waves of the sea. I trembled. The expectation of so new and imposing a spectacle augmented my agitation. The mood I was in made me dread its effects. We however walked on—Donna Bianca desired me to look on my right, I turned round, we were on the margin of the deep. At the sight of this vast ocean, which extended itself as far as the horizon which bounded my view, I remained immoveable. A sentiment purely religious calmed my troubled spirits. The dearest interests of my life, were for once effaced for a moment from my memory. I was petrified by an inexpressible sentiment of surprise

and admiration. Every terrestrial thought fled from me like a dream before this vast element which so powerfully proclaimed the immensity and glory of the Creator.

“ My audacious and impotent imagination was confounded, and extended itself beyond the waves and the sky, to contemplate, in unbounded space, an unchangeable eternity ; and it was lost in a boundless expanse. Ideas of grandeur without bounds, and till then unknown to me, confusedly struck my astonished judgement. I felt with pleasure that I was acquiring new sentiments to admire and adore the Creator of the universe, but very soon the sweet voice of Donna Bianca awoke me from this novel extacy.

“ We continued our walk along the shore. I loved passionately; we were both free; I relied equally on her heart and her words; and yet nothing could dissipate my profound melancholy. I enjoyed my happiness trembling, and I dreaded to look into futurity, which hath

in store for us so many chimerical projects and deceitful hopes. If, to realize these hopes, I essayed to represent happiness, such as love then offered it to me, I could see only an obscure veil which I dared not to lift up. Donna Bianca was then speaking of our approaching union. She even fixed the day and the hour which were to put me in possession of all I wished on earth, and yet I sighed; my eyes were filled with tears. She reproached me tenderly. Alas! answered I, how can happiness like mine be without the uneasiness of fear. 'Uneasy, great God! and of what?' Of every thing—I am in a world I am unacquainted with, and which will disapprove of our union; you have told me so. 'It cannot hinder it.' Ah! why are we not far removed from this fickle and jealous world? 'This world does not force us to brave the laws of its society, but virtue will justify our forgetfulness of them. O! Placide,' continued she, 'it is not a blind attachment which

makes you so dear to me. In giving way to the impulses of my heart, I am sure that my life will be more pure and more virtuous, as I shall make my fortune useful to mankind. The ideas of luxury, magnificence and vanity, which must by this time have visited your mind, have not altered the goodness of your heart. Indeed, you would not understand them, if their fatal influence on our actions could be explained to you ; for without any effort of the intellectual faculty, you would not hesitate in the choice of feeding thirty horses or fifty families. In raising the habitation of the poor, you will not like many others, think it much more pleasant to erect an useless and gaudy building in your garden ;—you will never prefer a brilliant trifle to a good action. You will do good, not only with simplicity, but with pleasure, and without once suspecting that, in society, there are sacrifices required of us in its performance. This is the husband whom I have

chosen. When his character is known; his genius and principles; when it will have been seen how he has improved my moral ideas; when the world shall have thus had an opportunity of judging of my choice, it must approve of our union.' O! my Placida, cried I, what do you say? What! me perfect your angelic virtues! This is the illusion of love. Have you forgotten all you have ever done before you became acquainted with me? Ah! do not think of raising me by lowering yourself. My real pride is that of being loved by you. I envy no other happiness. As I spoke thus, the encreased noise of the waves made me look round me, and I saw the sea gradually agitated by the wind. Its tumultuous billows, rising in awful grandeur, rolled themselves to the land in all their noisy pomp, and spent their strength at our feet. Sorrowfully gazing on this grand spectacle, I pressed the hand of Donna Bianca. The same sympathetic thought seized us both. 'O

heavens!' exclaimed she, looking at the sea, 'it was lately so calm.' Alas! replied I, it offers to us a striking image of our life, as deceitful as our hopes, and as boisterous and inconstant as the destiny of mortals; the brilliant surface of the deep hides unknown dangers. At these words I could perceive Donna Bianca shedding tears; I partook of her emotion. O! pardon cried I, falling at her feet; forgive this heart which love has rendered so timid. I am even fearful concerning my happiness. How can I believe in it when my imagination is unable to understand it? My mind wanders and sinks when I wish to think of it beforehand; for my life, my thoughts, and my very breath are centered in my love! I can understand its excess and extent, but the felicity which your language holds out to me, these celestial joys of love and of virtue;—No! I cannot comprehend them. In that delightful futurity which you foretell, it is very true I

can see you, I admire you surrounded by those enchanting arts, adorned with all the charms of modesty, innocence and goodness; my mind follows with delight your beneficent footsteps. I always follow you attending forlorn old-age, holding out your hand to the orphan, and succouring the unfortunate. But when I wish to rush before this divine face and prostrate myself at your feet, a dark cloud ever separates me from it. 'No! no!' replied Donna Bianca, 'we can never be separated; a happy tie, an indissoluble knot will unite us for ever. I cannot entertain your frivolous fears, and yet they grieve me. Ah! why should we lose one instant of such happiness?' Thus speaking, her tears flowed in streams and I mingled mine with them. At that moment I perceived Don Pedro who was coming with a carriage to seek us. We were seated on a rock. We arose, wiping away our tears. Donna Bianca, with a charming smile that diffused itself over

her face and was heightened by her tears, said, ‘let us hide our weakness from Don Pedro, for friendship can never imagine the oddities of love.’ Having rejoined Don Pedro, we stepped into the carriage.

“At the sight of Don Pedro the quietness of my mind was restored.—His presence always gave a perfect confidence and security, and gave me courage; for how could I doubt my happiness when I saw so rational a man without any fears about its fulfilment.—The remainder of the day fled away delightfully; and the following morning we all three set off for her estate. With what pleasure I entered this charming habitation, where, in a few days, I was to receive the hand of Donna Bianca!—It was decided that our union should take place in the chapel of the castle. Don Pedro forthwith went to the clergyman, to arrange with him respecting our marriage and fix upon the day, which was at the distance of one week.

“Vain hope of supreme happiness upon

earth!—O! presumptuous joy! How fatal is thine infatuation. With what enchantment to me did the hours of that day steal away! Yet I did not enjoy the felicity I was then partaking but with a species of tumultuous impatience. Unable to think of any thing but Monday, the day fixed for our union. Without ceasing I repeated to myself the word *Monday*. All my wishes and all my existence were consecrated to that day: I only breathed in expectation of it with all the ardour of my imagination. I one day walked unexpectedly with Donna Bianca into the chapel of the castle. What were our emotions and our sensations on entering that sacred place, which, in so short a time, was to become to us the august temple of Hymen! We were opposite to the altar on which we were to pronounce our vows; our eyes met and were filled with tears. At that instant the same thought united our souls, and expressed itself in our looks. We both advanced to

kneel before the altar. I held Donna Bianca's hand which tenderly returned the pressure of mine. Without doubt there are sensations which our feeble organs are not able to bear; for, from what I felt in that moment, I believed that if heaven had realized my dream of happiness, I should in that very spot have lost my life or my reason. Before we quitted the chapel, Donna Bianca wished to ornament the altar on which were four vases of alabaster, she filled them with roses, myrtles, and lilies, the symbols of joy, love and purity! and we vowed to return thither every morning together, to renew these flowers, by supplying the place of those which might wither and die.

“The Rector came to us in the evening, saying he had something very particular to communicate to Donna Bianca; and being assured that he might without any fear of indiscretion speak before me, he began. ‘It is eight days ago, Madame, since I have expected you with impatience;

for I have a very good action to propose to you. There are strange doings going forward in the castle of your neighbour, Don Louis Dinigo.' 'But,' interrupted she, 'Don Louis is at St. Ildephonze with the king?' 'True, Madame, his duties at court detain him there. He is expected to return in a month. In his absence, a housekeeper hath hitherto taken care of the castle; but another woman hath arrived about ten days back with a letter from Don Louis, with orders to the old housekeeper, to give up every thing in her charge. These two women having begun to dispute; Isabella (which is the name of the new housekeeper) hath made use of such strange language that different rumours are spread in the village, concerning very extraordinary noises which have been heard.—They talk of magic, profanation, and nocturnal scenes, and strange mysteries; and they have declared that meetings of witches take place every night in the tower, whose grated windows over-

look the large pond. Good Diego, our miller, who is worthy of being believed, from his frankness and his honesty, as you know, went purposely one night with his two sons in a boat to the bottom of the tower; and he told me on his word, that he heard funeral hymns, and had seen through the iron bars a burial escorted by black phantoms, bearing wax tapers; that he had returned four nights following, and that this sight was again renewed to him, and at the same hour."

"As I could not doubt the veracity of Diego," pursued the Rector, "I judged that this singular history ought to be scrutinized. I went also with Diego upon the water in his boat, and I certainly saw figures covered with long black veils, holding lighted tapers, pass and repass before the windows, singing psalms, but not our church service;—it was a kind of strange music, in the vulgar tongue, and it appeared to me to express religious solemn invocations. I found nothing criminal in

this nocturnal ceremony, which was not at all a funeral; but which had been rendered suspicious solely through its mysterious performance. I sent for Isabella to interrogate her. The words which escaped her mouth were so evasive, that I am satisfied these acts of piety conceal some criminal superstitions. Isabella confessed that every night there were going forward in the tower, odious profanations, with very wicked intentions; but that the former house-keeper had been the sole conductor of these diabolical plots,—that were I to have her called up she would deny every thing;—that if I went to the castle I should see nothing, for she would conceal every thing;—that the tapers would disappear, as would also the black crapes, the skulls, and the coffin, all which entirely filled one of the rooms of the castle. After these acknowledgements extorted with considerable difficulty, I threatened to denounce them to the holy office. Isabella then informed me that

as she knew your goodness, Madame, she would entrust you with the disclosure of these dreadful mysteries, as you are powerful to protect her against those enemies her sincerity might raise against her. Therefore, Madame, I am come to entreat that you will have the goodness to hear her confession to-morrow."

"Though this recital had roused Donna Bianca's curiosity, she showed an extreme dislike to interfere in a business of this nature. However, she made up her mind that she might keep the poor woman from being dragged before the inquisition, and promised to hear Isabella the next morning. I inquired what the character was which Don Louis bore? 'He is a man about forty-five years of age, of a grave and respectable exterior, but he does not enjoy a good reputation. I am told he is a man of an ardent temperament and of very licentious manners. I do not know him personally, nor have I ever received him at my house, and I scarcely ever meet him in company.'"

“ The rector having left us, Don Pedro arrived, and we related to him this singular adventure. He proposed that we should go that very night, on the pond belonging to the tower, which was about half a league from the castle, and we consented. About ten o'clock at night we went off in the carriage, and having arrived near the pond, we left it and the servants at the skirts of a small wood, and walked to the water. Diego, who had received orders to meet us there at that hour, was ready to receive us into his boat. The night was exceeding dark. I was seated in the boat between Donna Bianca and Don Pedro, holding a hand of each in mine. I felt Donna Bianca tremble, and I know not what emotion of terror seized me, but I shuddered. ‘ Placide,’ said Donna Bianca, ‘ what is the matter with you?’ Ah! answered I, here am I, between the two beings who divide between them the sentiments and affections of my heart! I ought to be

now the happiest of men—I am really so—but my tenderness ever resembles sorrow. What have we come to do here, in the middle of this profound night? Let us return to the castle. Don Pedro! pray speak to us? Don Pedro began to laugh. ‘You are really children in your love, and you never see but dark and gloomy objects before you—your presentiments are ever foreboding evil—I never saw such timid lovers before!’ Then, I answered, because there never were any so tender. While I spoke these words, the boat arrived at the bottom of the tower. Silence and obscurity reigned around; but, at the end of a few minutes, we perceived on the first floor, three figures dressed in black, holding tapers, and walking slowly towards the window. Then the song began. A single voice was heard—I groaned—I felt my strength fail me. Ah! dearly I repaid, at that instant, the intoxicating joy I experienced the first time I heard Donna Bianca sing

my ode. All my felicity was annihilated—all my hopes fled, without the chance of returning. A terrible night, which was to bury for ever in its shades, the feeble remains of my happiness, and which announced to me dismal days, devoted to regrets, to sighs, and to unnecessary grief, presented itself to my disturbed imagination. I instantly recognized the accent of an inhabitant of the valley; and the rustic simple voice of Inès, singing the religious hymn, the words and music of which I had composed. This melody and pious ceremony brought before me, at once, whatever might be her motives, Inès in her native simplicity, innocent, sensible, and still carrying in her tender bosom the strongest recollections of me. An instantaneous reflection suggested to me that, deceived but not seduced, she had been forced into this tower, and was there detained by some artifice. Yet she still preserved her sentiments and her piety! Thus the ties which bound me

to her were renewed, and Donna Bianca was lost to me for ever! The darkness of the night seemed to conceal my agitation. I was a prey to the most poignant grief, but Donna Bianca seated by my side was calm and tranquil.

“ ‘ Well Placide,’ said she, ‘ I love this song, and that youthful rustic voice. I can hardly understand the words, they appear to my mind extremely moving.’ Yes! cried I, to-morrow! all will be disclosed. O! tell me that you love me still! Let me hear once more that dear expression! That, in spite of fate and its dreadful forebodings, there may be yet, in this deceitful life, a moment of happiness for the unfortunate Placide! ‘ Great God! What is the meaning of this strange discourse?’ cried Donna Bianca. ‘ If I love you! Can you doubt it? When I live only for you—when my days are consecrated to you. Ah! do you not know that my existence, without you, would soon become burden-

some.' Stop! you pierce my heart—
Stop! said I. 'O! Don Pedro,' interrupted she, 'he is delirious.' No! no! said I, I am perfectly in my senses. I have still all my reason left—but that reason, that barbarous reason, which prescribes to me the most dreadful sacrifice! Hear then my fate!—I have just discovered the song and the voice of Inès—Inès is innocent!—'He must deliver her up,' said Donna Bianca, in a firm tone of voice, 'dear Placide, religion, humanity and honour, command us to act with zeal and promptitude. This is no time for sorrow and tears. Let us fulfil our duty, and we shall rise superior to the chastisements of fate.' At these words, I felt virtue's celestial flame rise in my soul—my admiration for this incomparable woman was then my sole happiness—it exalted my love; but it gave me, at the same time, all the strength of mind I so much stood in need of. Don Pedro and I fell at her feet. Don Pedro, natu-

rally so calm, felt the greatest enthusiasm; for the friendship which Donna Bianca inspired resembled love. I promised I would obey her—it was engaging myself to take for my guide the most sublime virtue. She declared that she was determined to enter the castle of Don Louis that very night and carry away Inès. But it was now midnight, and all the domestics had retired to rest. Don Pedro, however, found out a means of penetrating, which perfectly succeeded.

“ Having reached our carriage, which carried us to about six hundred paces from the castle, we alighted, and followed by two servants, we went up to the gate, where a bell soon warned the porter that some persons were without. Don Pedro named Donna Bianca, who was well known in the country, and demanded hospitality for her, under a pretence that an accident had befallen her carriage. The porter, without any difficulty, led us into the castle, and went to find the new

housekeeper, who, hearing Donna Bianca's name, hastened to rise, and soon arrived in the saloon, where we were. Donna Bianca, without any preamble, addressing herself to this woman.—‘ I know,’ said she, ‘ upon good authority, there is a young person, as dear to me as if she were my sister, shut up in the tower of this castle. I will see her and speak to her this instant. I rely on your good will, and if you now give me proofs of it, I shall take you into my service—I will protect you, and secure for you a future maintenance.’ At these words Isabella promised that ‘ she would do whatever was required of her.’ She owned that ‘ there was a young lady inhabiting the tower, these eight days past. Don Louis was passionately in love with her, though she had not the least suspicion of it. But he had formed a plan of seduction, which he intended to put in practice as soon as he could leave court.’ Isabella added, ‘ that the young lady was in bed

under the care of the former housekeeper ; that the doors of the tower were fastened on the inside with large bolts, and it appeared to her impossible to enter it! Don Pedro proposed to Isabella to go and knock, and raise the old housekeeper up, and oblige her to open the doors, upon pretence that a courier from Don Louis had arrived, and wished to deliver to her a letter. Isabella consented to it.

“ We all went to the tower, and Isabella called the housekeeper, who came to speak to her through the door, and after having listened to ascertain the voice of Isabella, she opened it. Then Don Pedro flew into the tower, seized this infamous duenna, and obliged her, by his threats, to keep silence ; and leading her out, told us, he would be answerable for her, and that Isabella would find him in the saloon we had just left, as soon as she had introduced Donna Bianca to Inès. He left as centinels, at the door of the tower, his two servants, as he ex-

pected to find at the castle Diego and his two sons. We were sufficiently numerous and powerful to master all the domestics of the castle, for they amounted only to three or four male and female servants.

“ I followed Donna Bianca into this dismal tower, but it was agreed I should not enter the apartment of Inès, lest the surprise my presence should create might be fatal to her. I stopped at the door, which was left half open, in an agony of suspense, trouble and anxiety. I spent an hour in this way, hearing every word which was spoken in the chamber. Isabella entered alone at first.—Inès had lain down, with her lamp burning by her bed side. Inès awoke, and questioned Isabella in an uneasy tone. Isabella answered, ‘ that a young and charming lady who followed her, was coming in, and was the bearer of agreeable, and most extraordinary news.’ ‘ Agreeable!’ replied Inès, ‘ there is no such thing for

me!" 'Here she comes,' said Isabella, who instantly went out to go to Don Pedro in the saloon of the castle. Donna Bianca, with open arms, and her face bathed in tears, entered the chamber. Inès, at the sight of Donna Bianca, shewed a sweet surprise. Donna Bianca seated on the side of Inès' bed, threw her arms around her in the most affectionate manner. 'Ah! Madame,' said Inès, returning her caresses tenderly, 'you pity me—then you know who I am?' 'Yes, I know you, dear Inès; but let us not lose these precious moments! I have many things to say to you. Do you know where you are?' 'I am in a convent of nuns, where I have taken the veil, and in a year I shall pronounce my vows.' 'And where are the nuns?' 'In the large building; but as I am still a novice, I remain in this tower till I shall have completed the time of my noviciate—and I see only two novices like myself and the superior.' 'What kind of a life do you

lead here?' ' I mourn and say my prayers.' ' Do you not make some nocturnal processions here?' ' Yes, both morning and night; it is I who have established them, in order to chaunt a hymn, which is doubly dear to me, because it celebrates the goodness of God, and because it was composed by one who loved me heretofore!' ' Amiable and sweet Inès, it is impossible to cease to love you! But proceed, and lay open to me your angelic soul. Who has secured for you this religious asylum?' ' Don Louis.' ' How did you become acquainted with Don Louis?' ' Since you know who I am, you must know where I was born.'—' O! yes, in the valley of the Battuécas.' ' When my lover and friend had been long absent, and the time was gone when he should have returned, I was very uneasy. Don Louis came then into the valley. I saw him—he appeared to me a venerable old man, for his hairs are grey. I met him by accident at the

cascade of the torrent—I was determined to ask him if he knew what had become of my lover—I approached him. He received me with so much goodness, that I was encouraged to speak. I asked him several questions. He told me that my lover had forgotten me, and that he was married. I cried bitterly, and I said I will go and die where he dwells. There are convents, in *the other world he is in*, and I will go there and be a nun. Don Louis, who is as pious as Father Isidore, offered to conduct me to some holy monastery. I consented, and I kept my design to myself, for fear some of my people might oppose me; and I escaped the very next morning by day light. Notwithstanding the respect I had for Don Louis, I did not find my mind easy, when I saw myself alone in the company of a man. About three leagues from the valley, we arrived at a town, where we stopped, and I begged Don Louis to find some female, who would accompany us

to Madrid. He soon gratified my wishes in this respect, and found one who accompanied me all the way. On our arrival at that great city, he sent me to this holy house, with Isabella, who introduced me to the superior, for without the protection and introduction of Don Louis I could not have been received here, as they never admit any strangers: And he has said, he will undertake a journey thither, purposely to determine and persuade the prioress, who still hesitates about my making my vows.'

"During this interesting and ingenuous recital, I was bathed in tears, and when I heard Donna Bianca speak, I knew by the alteration of her voice, that she also was shedding tears. 'Innocent and dear Inès! you have been deceived, but Providence hath watched over you.' "How so! Have I been deceived?" The place you are confined in is not a convent, and the worthless creature who hath received you is neither a prioress nor a nun.' 'But,

Madame! she is very pious; she wears a black dress and a veil." 'She is no nun, Inès.' 'But the two novices?' 'Are two servants belonging to the castle.' 'But Don Louis?' 'Is an impostor.' 'What! with such an air, looking so grave and so wise with his venerable grey locks? Isabella has then also deceived me?' 'Yes! she has, but she hath repented in time, and confessed all to me. You are not aware, sweet innocent Inès! of all the craftiness of Don Louis; for your lover is not married, but still loves you most tenderly.' 'Is that possible?' cried Inès, bathed in tears. 'Ah! Madame, how I love you.'—She sunk into the arms of Donna Bianca, who pressed her to her bosom; and, clasped in each other's embrace, they continued for some time silent, shedding tears. I could only distinguish their sobs, for at that instant my heart flew towards each;—it seemed, in fact, divided between them both.—At last Donna Bianca broke si-

lence, telling Inès that she was determined to take her away that very night. Inès hastened to arise and dressed herself in her nun's vestments. She had none other.

Donna Bianca after some preparations, apprised her that I was in the castle, and instantly called me.—I ran and precipitated myself at the feet of these two celestial creatures. Donna Bianca raising me, took hold of my trembling hand, and siezing that of Inès, put it in mine; then, leaning on my arm, 'Come,' said she, 'let us go and meet Don Pedro.' The agitation of that faithful friend was extreme when he saw us all three. He squeezed my hand without being able to utter a single syllable; then, in silence, he led us out of that odious habitation. The old house-keeper was left to herself to brood over her remorse. Isabella followed us. We were soon seated in the carriage.

"When we arrived at the castle of Donna Bianca, she led Inès into an apartment adjacent to her own. I remained

with Don Pedro. I felt the necessity and desire of being alone with him. I wished to talk with him on what had passed, to speak my sentiments, and to express my profound astonishment at the incomprehensible wickedness of Don Louis, and shed my tears and bemoan my fate without constraint in the bosom of a friend. I never went to rest that night, and the first rays of the sun gave me exquisitely painful sensations. Being determined to flee that very day, I was going to see Donna Bianca for the last time, and bid her an eternal adieu.

“ At eight o'clock in the morning, she sent for Don Pedro and me. We instantly went into an apartment where she was alone. She grew pale on my entrance, Don Pedro approaching her, kissed her hand, saying, ‘It is the skirts of your robe we ought to kiss, madam—We have done our duty,’ replied she. ‘Your friend justifies every sentiment of esteem and tenderness, which I will pre-

serve to my very latest breath. O Placide! continued she, ' the night which hath just glided away, hath overturned all our projects, hath altered our destiny, and yet the remembrance of this memorable night will, in future, become a source of the sweetest recollections we can indulge in. We have saved innocence and virtue from the dangerous snares of vice. We have restored happiness to a young and tender creature, as artless and as sensible as she is amiable. It is true, that in performing these noble actions, we have sacrificed ourselves, and renounced our tenderest sentiments, and our dearest hopes. Well! that thought alone carries in itself its own reward.—And besides, the merit of having performed these good actions, can never bring us any sorrow or regret.'

"As she spoke these last words, she arose and instantly left the apartment. I flew into the arms of Don Pedro, and I felt his tears gliding o'er my face, as he pressed his cheek to mine. In a few mi-

nutes we heard footsteps in the adjacent apartment; the door between it and the one we were in, immediately flew open, and Donna Bianca entered, leading Inès by the hand. Donna Bianca had herself dressed Inès in a white robe, with as much elegance as simplicity. 'Here,' said she, 'here is your bride! To behold and hear her is all that is required to love her. She has given you the strongest proofs of her tenderness. You will know how to appreciate so many charms, so much innocence and sensibility! The most profound sorrow could not alter her sweet temper. She hath never complained, but would have buried herself beside you; and though piously resigned, the grief which preyed on her spirits would have brought her to an unripe grave. Ah!' added she, 'you must both be happy! You will be so, and this very thought will yield me an inexhaustible source of happiness. Adieu!' said she, in a weak voice—'Dear Don Pedro pre-

side at their nuptials—I confide them entirely to you.—Adieu !

“ During this discourse, I stood pale and cold, and it seemed as if the universe had vanished from before my dim eyes.—

‘ O, Madame !’ cried Inès, sobbing and embracing Donna Bianca, ‘ I am sorry to see you leave us.—Your goodness so overpowers me ! Inès’ said I, ‘ it is on our knees we must thank her ; and we were instantly on our knees.’—She held out her hands to us.—I once more pressed in mine that beloved hand, and bathed it with my tears.—She was going to speak, but the words expired on her lips. She drew down her veil to cover that enchanting face I was never more to behold. I felt my heart wrung within me.—Don Pedro dragged me away.—Inès followed us. My intellects were quite gone.—We entered, or I was carried, into a carriage. Such was our mournful separation.

“ Inès crowned my plighted faith at Madrid, in the chapel belonging to the

house of Don Pedro, where our vows were solemnized.

“The day of my marriage, Don Pedro received, by a courier, a letter from Donna Bianca. It was couched in these terms.

“My dear friend! employ all your influence over our young friends to prevent them returning to the valley. Let them settle in any other solitude, but I cannot think of their going to live in cottages made of the mere branches of trees. Several reasons hinder me from proposing the castle I am now in, but I entreat they will accept another estate I possess in the kingdom of Granada. Obtain for me this fresh proof of their affection for me. . . .

“Tell him also, that I insist upon it, by all the ties which the affection of a sister or a mother has a right to expect, that I wish him to follow with perseverance the course of his studies, and let him not neglect any of his talents, especially poetry and painting. Give him, when he departs from you, all the books he may

stand in need of, for the prosecution of these objects.

“ I am calm, I am satisfied—I see their happiness in futurity, and ever relying on your friendship, I must be happy.”

“ The proposition of fixing me in the kingdom of Granada, could not then be persevered in, from the state of mind in which I was. I persisted in my resolution of retiring to the valley; but I was prevailed on to remain three weeks longer with Don Pedro. From the moment that the sacred vow had united my fate to that of Inès, I ceased entirely to think of the past, or even of myself, or my future destiny. I was become perfectly indifferent as to my own fate; but Donna Bianca's gave me heart-rending uneasiness. I beheld her a lonely widow, without any ties to bind her to life. I knew too well that so feeling a heart could not exist without some attachment or other. And must I own it, that the idea of another affection might efface my remembrance from her

heart! That very idea distracted me, and from it arose another which speedily became predominant in my breast. Donna Bianca esteemed Don Pedro sincerely, and had for him the most tender friendship. He was all admiration of her. I fancied, and with reason, that their union would secure them that domestic happiness which time only can augment in sweetness and purity.

“After many reflections I judged it best to write to Donna Bianca herself;—to open my heart to her, and disclose all my fears, and all my inquietudes about her fate,—even to confess my own weakness and hide nothing from her; and especially to say, that her image would not cease to torment my soul, till I should learn that she was the wife of a husband and the mother of a lovely family of children, worthy of her attachment. In short, I conceived that the wife of my best friend, would ever be the object of my most tender respect and veneration,

but would no longer have the power of making my feeble imagination wander as it had hitherto done.

“ These ideas made on her mind every impression I wished them to produce. She did not exactly make me privy to her thoughts, but she did not wish to reject, altogether, this wish of my heart and of my reason.—It was leaving me still merely to hope.—I informed Don Pedro of what I have now told you, his joy was equal to his surprise. Thus I was preparing, in my mind, the happiness of two persons who were so dear to me.

“ When I returned to the valley, Don Pèdro wished to accompany us thither, and stay with us eight days.

“ At the end of eighteen months I received the happy tidings that he and Donna Bianca were united by indissoluble ties. ‘ I found again,’ added Placide, ‘ my peace of mind, the most to be desired of all other blessings. I am become a father. The amiable and tender Inès

renders my life happy. The arts are my sweetest amusements,—and I have once more the prospect of seeing those worthy friends to whom my heart is devoted.

“Gonzala, the virtuous old man of whom I have spoken to you before, is just dead, and Donna Bianca has adopted the young Theresa. Don Pedro has destined for me that mansion wherein I spent so many happy moments; but we have agreed that I should not inhabit it these five or six years; for here I intend to watch over the first years of my son’s infancy.—In a few years I shall go with my family into that charming asylum formerly consecrated by a most noble beneficence to the arts and friendship, and then I shall be happy to end my career.”

END OF VOL. I.